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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable JOHN E. WALSH, a Senator from the State of Montana.

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Eternal God, descend on our hearts. Thank You that Your mercy is from everlasting to everlasting upon those who come to You with reverence.

Today, incline the hearts of our Senators to Your wisdom, empowering them to keep Your precepts and to accomplish Your purposes. Keep them mindful of life's brevity and their accountability to You. Lord, protect them from life's dangers as You guide them through the darkness to a safe haven.

Please be near to the families of the victims of the Fort Hood shooting.

We pray in Your merciful Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Presiding Officer led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

The assistant legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,
Washington, DC, April 3, 2014.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN E. WALSH, a

Senator from the State of Montana, to perform the duties of the Chair.

PATRICK J. LEAHY,
President pro tempore.

Mr. WALSH thereupon assumed the Chair as Acting President pro tempore.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

BRINGING BACK MEMORIES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, every time I see the Presiding Officer introducing the prayer and directing the attention of the Senate to follow the Presiding Officer in reciting the pledge of allegiance, it brings back to me a lot of memories.

When I first came to the Senate, we had several of Members of Congress who had been to war. Now that is not the case. We all look at JOHN MCCAIN with such idealism of what he did in the Vietnam war. There are others but there aren't many, and to have now the Presiding Officer having not only been to war but being a general and having led hundreds of people from Montana to war, I am sure when that Pledge of Allegiance is said by the Presiding Officer, your feelings are a little different from anyone else's because during those bitter battles in Iraq, members of your unit were killed and injured.

So even though we don't say much publicly about the new addition to the Senate, I want the record to reflect that the people of Montana are so fortunate to have this patriot here in the Senate.

We will miss Max Baucus tremendously. He was my friend. But I am really impressed with the Presiding Officer and—I repeat—his having been not only a warrior but a general who led a lot of warriors in war.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3979, which is the legislative vehicle for the unemployment insurance extension bill.

We are working on an agreement on the unemployment insurance bill as well as some executive nominations. Senators will be notified when we are able to arrange those votes.

FORT HOOD

Mr. REID. Talking about the military, as I just did, we have to reflect on what took place at Fort Hood yesterday—another tragedy. We have just a general understanding about the motives. But our hearts are all broken as a result of another tragedy at this great military training facility. It was just a few years ago that there were mass murders on that military base.

Our Nation mourns every casualty that befalls our brave servicemembers. These seem so unnecessary and such a sad event. Fort Hood has seen more than its fair share of tragedy in the last few years. We know this community of warriors and their families are grieving and questioning this latest act of senseless violence.

As the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, GEN Martin Dempsey, put it, "This is a community that has faced and overcome crises with resilience and strength." That is true.

We stand with the people of Fort Hood today. We stand with all of our military wherever they are situated in the world, admiring their strength and resilience.

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, no one can dispute that Winston Churchill was a statesman and the most famous in the history of our world. This is what he said:

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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Of this I am quite sure, that if we open a quarrel between the past and the present, we shall find that we have lost the future.

Why do I say that? Even though those remarks were made more than 70 years ago, I believe there are many in Congress who should focus on what Winston Churchill said because it is true. For far too long Republicans have obsessed over the Affordable Care Act—ObamaCare. The Affordable Care Act is the law of the land. It has been for more than 4 years.

From the very day this law was signed, Republicans have zealously worked to undermine it in so many different ways. Day in and day out they have clamored for repeal of this bill. House Republicans have voted more than 50 times trying desperately to cripple ObamaCare. They shut down the government trying to defund health care reform. And how has that worked? While they have obsessed over the past, the country has moved forward.

Now Republicans have to face the fact that millions of their own constituents, millions of Republicans are benefiting from health care reform in record numbers. But my Republican friends still insist on nothing short of repeal. So I ask my Republican colleagues, what would they like to repeal? What would repeal look like?

Because of the Affordable Care Act, millions of Americans can no longer be denied health insurance because of preexisting conditions. What are some of the preexisting conditions that caused so much trouble in the past? Diabetes. How about this one: You are a woman. Many insurance companies considered women having a preexisting disability because they were women. Millions of young adults are now able to stay on their parents' policies until age 26. That is more than 3 million. Millions of seniors are saving huge amounts of money on prescription drugs because we are in the process of filling the doughnut hole. This year alone millions of Americans will receive maternity coverage. Repealing the Affordable Care Act would be repealing many of these and many more. I could spend a long time talking about what would be repealed.

My counterpart, the Senator from Kentucky, will probably address the Senate after I finish. In his home State of Kentucky, 360,000 people have signed up for coverage under the Affordable Care Act. Kentucky is not New York; it is not Texas; it is not California. It is a sparsely populated State, somewhat like Nevada. Yet 360,000 people have signed up for coverage. Of those, 75 percent were previously uninsured. That is approaching 300,000 people. Over a quarter million Kentuckians who did not have insurance now have health coverage under the Affordable Care Act. In other words, ObamaCare has reduced the uninsured population of Kentucky by 40 percent.

I wonder when my friend from Kentucky will explain to the 270,000 Ken-

tuckians how he plans to repeal the law without stripping the new health benefits. How exactly will he and his Republican colleagues guarantee that their newly insured constituents have no lapses in coverage? Remember, they want to do away with 270,000 people who didn't have insurance. They want to do away with 360,000 people in Kentucky who are signed up for insurance. So I await their answer.

In the meantime, Democrats will keep looking to the future, and the future of the Affordable Care Act is bright. Every day more and more Americans are getting health coverage under the law. On Monday we learned that 7,045,000 people had already signed up and about 1 million people on the State exchanges—370,000 in Kentucky, for example. We know there are more than 3 million young people on their parents' insurance because of that. We know there are millions of people who are now covered because of their ability to become part of Medicaid. So we are talking about a lot of people.

Health reform is working, and the law is here to stay. The more Americans see the law is working, the more they want it to stay. The time of fighting over the past is over. Remember what Winston Churchill said:

Of this I am quite sure, that if we open a quarrel between the past and the present, we shall find that we have lost the future.

I say this very seriously: I invite my Republican friends to look to the future. Put this obstruction behind them. Work with us to make the Affordable Care Act even better for their constituents and our constituents and Americans generally. Together, we can help millions more Americans get the health coverage they deserve.

RECOGNITION OF THE REPUBLICAN LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

FORT HOOD

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I wish to start this morning with a word about yesterday's tragic shooting at Fort Hood.

As the investigation continues, we will learn more facts, but what we already know is that Fort Hood has faced a great deal of adversity and challenges over the past few years and that the community there has rallied around our uniformed personnel. We also know that the on-base military police appear to have responded quickly, appropriately, and obviously at great personal risk to themselves. So, as always in a tragedy such as this, we admire the courage and commitment of those who rushed to help the victims. And of course we are all thinking and praying today for the victims, their families, and their fellow soldiers and civilians at Fort Hood.

JOB CREATION

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, all week Republicans have been coming to the floor to talk about our proposals to ignite job creation and get the economy back on track. We have been talking about ideas that can help middle-class Americans who have been struggling just to make it in the Obama economy. But our Democratic colleagues don't seem to care all that much. They seem too preoccupied with an election still 7 months away. Instead of working with us on ideas for job creation, they have been talking about pretty much anything else.

Time and again yesterday Republicans asked our Democratic colleagues for consideration of our amendments by the Senate. And time and time again those efforts were rebuffed.

Republicans have a lot of good ideas. All we are asking is for those ideas to get fair consideration. Let's get our amendments pending, have a debate, and actually take a vote.

Some Senate Democrats seem to see things entirely differently. They don't even want the elected representatives of the people to have a say—a say on what Americans say is the most important issue facing our country. This is especially galling because our friends across the aisle always seem to find time for poll-tested show votes aimed at firing up the left. They may not be overly concerned about passing jobs legislation for the American people, but we can bet they will be forcing everyone to endure plenty of political show votes as we get closer to November. The so-called agenda that rolled out last week basically guarantees it. They have already admitted they don't intend to pass the things it contains. That is not the point, they say. The true end is to help Democrats retain their Senate majority. They have essentially already admitted that, which is somewhat dishonorable. No wonder Americans are so disillusioned with Washington.

Look, the American people want us to focus on their concerns, not political show votes talked about by a few political strategists over at the Democrats' campaign committee. As I indicated, jobs are right up there at the top of that list. We will see today whether Senate Democrats are actually serious about giving our constituents what they want. It appears our colleagues might allow consideration of one amendment—just one. We are not even sure about that yet.

At least the amendment we would be considering is a good one, and I appreciate the work of Senator THUNE and others in putting that together. This would reduce the tax burden on small businesses. It would provide relief to the Kentucky coal communities that have been under continual assault by this administration. It would approve the Keystone Pipeline, which would create thousands of jobs right away. It would repeal the medical device tax, which even many Democrats acknowledge is killing jobs. It would eliminate

ObamaCare's 30-hour workweek rule which is cutting paychecks to the middle class. In other words, this is an amendment that seeks to take the causes of joblessness head on rather than simply treating the symptoms of a down economy. It is an amendment that aims to help Americans find jobs with a steady paycheck and the promise of a better life.

There are other amendments not contained within this package the Senate should be voting on too. For instance, the national right-to-work amendment Senator PAUL and I have just introduced—transformational legislation that would empower American workers and put our country on a path to greater prosperity.

But the larger point is this: The Senate needs to be allowed to function again. While Members file amendments on behalf of their constituents, those amendments should get due consideration. That is particularly true when those amendments have bipartisan support and aim to address our still-ailing economy and the families struggling in it. My hope is our Democratic colleagues will allow this to happen.

These are serious times and we cannot afford to waste months on purely partisan proposals that have no hope of passing. We need to work together to advance serious proposals that expand jobs and opportunity.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

SERGEANT FIRST CLASS MATTHEW S. SLUSS-TILLER

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I want to pay tribute to a Kentucky Special Operations Forces soldier who was lost in service to his country, the life of SFC Matthew S. Sluss-Tiller of Catlettsburg, KY, which prematurely ended on February 3, 2010, in Pakistan, where he was serving in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. He was killed when the enemy attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device. He was 35 years old.

For his service in uniform, Sergeant First Class Sluss-Tiller received many awards, medals, and decorations, including the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, two Meritorious Service Medals, five Army Commendation Medals, the Joint Service Achievement Medal, five Army Achievement Medals, five Army Good Conduct Medals, the National Defense Service Medal with Bronze Service Star, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Kosovo Campaign Medal with Bronze Star, two Afghanistan Campaign Medals with Bronze Service Stars, the Iraq Campaign Medal with Bronze Service Star, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, three noncommissioned officers professional development ribbons, the Army service ribbon, two overseas service ribbons, the NATO Medal, the combat action badge, and the senior parachutist badge; obviously a much decorated soldier.

Pictured behind me is Sergeant First Class Sluss-Tiller with his daughter Hannah, who was only 3 years old when he died. Matthew's wife Melissa proudly sent this picture to my office so it can be honored on the Senate floor. It was taken the summer before Matthew was killed, and it was his last picture with his daughter.

Melissa remembers the bond between Matthew and Hannah fondly. "He used to sing to me and Hannah," she says.

He would dance with her standing on his feet, singing loudly. Thinking of it makes me smile. He loved being a husband and a father, and he was great at both.

Born and raised in eastern Kentucky, Matthew graduated from Lawrence County High School in 1993. Brenda Thornbury, his former art teacher, remained friends with Matthew after he graduated and recalls he knew from a young age what he wanted to do. "Matthew was a wonderful person," she says.

He was always eager to do whatever he needed to do to serve his country . . . he knew he would serve his country. He loved the Lord, and he loved his family.

Matthew's father Edward Tiller agrees. "From the time I bought him his first GI Joe, he wanted to be an Army man," he said.

In short, it seems clear that for Matthew, the Army was not just a job, it was a way of life. He was dedicated to justice and service in the name of our country.

In 1991, Matthew enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserves as a heavy construction mechanic and served at the 261st Ordnance Company located at Cross Lanes, WV. In 1993, he left the family farm and enlisted in the Active-Duty Army as a signal specialist. He served at Fort Bragg, NC, as well as in Germany and in Kuwait.

SFC Jamie Mullinax, a friend of Matthew's who trained with him at Fort Bragg, knew well the look of happiness we can see in Matthew's face behind me. He says:

If you knew Matt, you knew that smile. He always strived to do the best at what he did. I know he believed in what he was doing and loved wearing the military uniform and believed in what it stood for.

As the list of awards, medals, and decorations I read earlier makes clear, Matthew excelled at being a soldier. In his many years of training, he successfully completed the U.S. Army Airborne course, the Jumpmaster course, the Master Jumpmaster course, the Air Movement Operations course, the Military Transition Team course, the Civil Affairs Qualification course, and the Advanced and Basic Noncommissioned Officer's courses.

Prior to his time of deployment, Matthew deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Joint Guardian in Kosovo. In his final deployment Matthew was assigned to the 96th Civil Affairs Battalion, 95th Civil Affairs Brigade, based out of Fort Bragg.

In his free time Matthew loved golf, hunting, hiking, camping, and riding

motorcycles, and he was a passionate fan of UK basketball.

The many people who came to pay their respects at Matthew's funeral in eastern Kentucky witnessed the recognition of Matthew's sacrifice when they saw a three-star general come to their small town to lead the honor guard.

LTG John Mulholland delivered these remarks at the service:

Matthew was part of America's Army Special Operations Forces and as such was one of the finest soldiers in the world.

He went on:

That's no exaggeration, that he was embarked on a very important if not critical mission that is directly tied to the security of this country.

Of course, as impressive as his service record was, I think the picture behind me makes clear that the most important job to Matthew was husband and father. I know his family misses him terribly.

Melissa says the following about her husband:

I believe that our souls are beacons glowing immensely with light so powerful and beautiful that only in heaven can we become a true vision of ourselves. I know my Matthew is standing tall in heaven, his light so stunning a reflection of who he was. God needed him, and I cannot question that.

We are thinking of Matthew's loved ones today, including his wife Melissa, his daughter Hannah, his parents Edward Tiller and Jane Blankenship, his stepparents Von Tiller and Forest Blankenship, his siblings Selena Dawn Pack Blankenship, Michael Blankenship, and Annette Sorg, and many other beloved family members and friends.

Our country has lost a faithful and devoted hero with the passing of SFC Matthew S. Sluss-Tiller. I know my colleagues join me in expressing great condolences to his family for their loss, and great gratitude to them for lending our country such an honorable and noble patriot.

I hope Hannah and all of Matthew's loved ones know that America will always—always—be grateful for his sacrifice.

I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 3979, which the clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 3979) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

Reid (for Reed) amendment No. 2874, of a perfecting nature.

Reid amendment No. 2875 (to amendment No. 2874), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2877 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2874), to change the enactment date.

Reid amendment No. 2878 (to amendment No. 2877), of a perfecting nature.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOOKER. Mr. President, I rise today to speak on behalf of the 2.3 million Americans, including the 140,000 New Jerseyans who have been without a job for months and desperately need our help. These Americans are Americans who are veterans who stood for us in the military and Armed Forces. These are families and individuals with children. These are our seniors. These are folks who have been working for decades and suddenly found themselves in the worst economy of my lifetime without a job.

I am very proud of this body. We are inching closer toward passing legislation to restore Federal unemployment insurance. What this money does is it takes families from crisis with these meager checks to give a little bit of stability so they can do what is necessary to look for work.

It helps them keep their car insurance so they can ride to interviews. It helps them keep the cable service going so they can apply online and actually file their résumés as they look for jobs. It helps them meet mortgage payments, so they can keep a roof over their heads or rental payments as well.

I want to thank the incredible bipartisan leadership of DEAN HELLER and JACK REED. Senator HELLER and Senator REED have been working hard together with a group of us relentlessly to bring us this far. I have been so grateful for the leadership of those two Senators and others because it made us so close in this body to getting unemployment insurance extended.

This is a bipartisan bill. It involves compromise. It is what the American people want us to do, Republicans and Democrats coming together for millions of Americans that are in crisis right now through no fault of their own, in an economy where there are three people looking for a job for every single job that is available.

I want to express my gratitude to the entire bipartisan group cosponsoring the bill. My colleagues, Senator REED, Senator HELLER, Senator MERKLEY, Senator SHERROD BROWN, Senator DURBIN, Senator SUSAN COLLINS, Senator ROB PORTMAN, Senator LISA MURKOWSKI, and Senator MARK KIRK, Re-

publicans and Democrats alike who hammered out a compromise, have done the difficult work and are pushing to move this forward.

I also want to thank people from New Jersey who have shared their stories with me, who have been active and engaging from online posts, letters, and phone calls—all of them fighting to find work. I have heard from Republican New Jerseyans and Democratic New Jerseyans. I have heard from military veterans and single moms. I have heard from folks who are so hungry to work. But while they are looking, they are looking to this body, to all of Congress to help them meet the basic minimum needs so that they can continue to have some stability and not be swallowed up by the quicksand of economic crisis and to be able to continue to find a job.

They are living examples. Each and every one of those millions of Americans are examples of what is at stake if we do not act. I have heard painful stories of people facing real crises, from homelessness to skipping medications, doing everything they can to keep some semblance of stability so that they can find a job. Unfortunately, many are falling through the cracks. Many are facing the darkest of days.

As the Senate prepares to vote on this incredibly vitally important bill, I want to stress that this legislative body is only as effective as both Chambers and parties being able to come together, to really follow in that great American tradition that for the last 50 years, Democrats and Republicans during times of economic crisis, have come together and found a way to hammer out compromises to extend unemployment insurance under Reagan, under Bush, under Clinton, and under Carter. We found a way to get forward, both Chambers being there for Americans in the economic crisis.

Today is a significant step in our fight to restore hope to America's unemployed but only if this bill is also voted on and passed in the House of Representatives.

I have sat in living rooms, diners, and soup kitchens all across the State of New Jersey, and I can tell you the crisis is real. I am hopeful that if my colleagues in the House of Representatives listen to the voices—Republicans and Democrats, red and blue, North and South, all across this country—of their unemployed constituents, they will do what is right. They will shun that intellectually unreal idea that Americans are lazy, that they don't want to work. We have millions of Americans out there fighting for their hope of finding a job, and they need the help of the House of Representatives, as I believe they will get it from the Senate this week.

No matter our party, all of us have folks in our home States who are unemployed and suffering because we have thus far failed to do what every other Congress has done in the past when long-term unemployment rates

have been so high, as they are today. We must extend Federal unemployment insurance. America needs our House of Representatives to listen to the pleas of those who are barely making ends meet.

I remember Joan and her daughter, a recent Rutgers University graduate. They live together and were both cut off from unemployment insurance the same week in December. The modest unemployment checks that Joan and her daughter were receiving had helped them to keep up with mortgage payments. While they waited for us to vote, their home was placed into foreclosure.

Then there is Lauren from Clifton, who wrote my office saying she had sent out close to 1,000 resumes without luck and had reached the point where she couldn't pay to keep the heat on in her house during this brutal winter and she feared her phone was going to have to be cut off next. She wrote:

I've been looking for work tirelessly. What does someone in my situation do?

These folks have worked hard all of their lives. They have played by the rules but unfortunately happen to be in a bad economy not of their making, which they did not contribute to, and are caught in these difficult times. They are doing everything right and so should their representatives in Congress.

Today we are casting a vote for them. Today I am proud to say that in the Senate we are coming together, Democrats and Republicans, hammering out a compromise, meeting each other in the middle, and doing what is expected of us by Americans—reaching out, lending a hand, in a time of crisis. I implore my colleagues in the House of Representatives to do the same.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOKER). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I rise to speak to my amendment No. 2959 to the unemployment insurance legislation that is before us. The amendment is called the Good Jobs, Good Wages, and Good Hours Act.

Twelve times Congress has voted to extend emergency unemployment benefits since 2008, and what do we have to show for those 12 extensions of these benefits. More than 10 million Americans remain unemployed. Of those, more than 3.8 million Americans have been unemployed for longer than 6 months. Millions more remain underemployed or have simply dropped out of the workforce altogether, too discouraged to even look for work in this stagnant economy.

Over that same period a Democrat-led Senate and the Obama White House have done little but grow the size of the government and shrink the size of the middle class.

In 2009, Congress passed a \$1 trillion stimulus bill that poured taxpayer dollars into projects such as Solyndra and a battery manufacturer that is now owned by the Chinese. It failed to create the jobs and economic growth that was promised by the White House, but it succeeded in creating 5 straight years of record deficits.

In 2010 Congress enacted ObamaCare—essentially a government takeover of one-sixth of our economy with 2,700 pages of new laws and 25,000 pages of new regulations. It didn't fulfill the President's promise of lowering health care costs or letting families keep their doctors, but it has succeeded in canceling health plans and raising taxes.

In 2010 Congress enacted Dodd-Frank. It hasn't fixed too big to fail, but in one respect it has succeeded in creating jobs. It is estimated that more than 30,000 employees will be required to file the paperwork associated with the \$18 billion in Dodd-Frank compliance costs for our financial sector.

Meanwhile, Congress has failed to put a check on the EPA, which continues pushing regulations that have record-setting price tags. These regulations aren't creating jobs, but they are fulfilling the President's promise to make energy prices skyrocket.

Five years into the Obama administration and the scorecard doesn't look very good, with \$456 billion in new regulations, \$1.7 trillion in new taxes, 10.4 million people unemployed, and economic growth far behind the pace of other post-World War II recoveries.

So here we are debating the 13th extension of emergency unemployment benefits in the past 5 years because we have 3.8 million people in this country, workers who have been out of work for more than 6 months. If enacted, these benefits would last until June. Then what? Are we going to have a 14th extension, perhaps a 15th extension? Without job creating policies, this 13th extension is just another bandaid that doesn't address the true causes of chronic joblessness that plague the Obama economy.

My Republican colleagues and I came to the floor yet again this week to debate and to vote on amendment ideas that will change the course the Obama administration has put the country on. We have offered dozens of amendments that will stimulate private-sector investment, create jobs, and make energy and health care more affordable. I have worked with many of my colleagues on a package of job-creating ideas that we would like to add to this 13th extension of emergency unemployment insurance benefits. My amendment, as I said, is called the Good Jobs, Good Wages, Good Hours Act, and it includes many of these ideas.

I would like to share a few of them with my colleagues in the Senate so

people understand that when we come to the floor to talk about offering amendments and getting votes on amendments, we are serious. We have real substantive ideas that we believe will address the fundamental issue—the underlying cause of chronic high unemployment—by getting people back to work through job creation, through an expanding and growing economy.

My amendment includes a provision that has been pushed by Senator HOEVEN that would finally approve the Keystone XL Pipeline. After 5 years of delay, it is time to approve the pipeline and the 40,000 jobs it will support. Senator HOEVEN has been the leading advocate of that here in the Senate.

The amendment I am offering includes Leader MCCONNELL's legislation to stop EPA's war on affordable energy. Leader MCCONNELL's bill puts consumers ahead of liberal and environmental groups by stopping costly regulations that will make it even more difficult for the middle class to make ends meet.

My amendment includes a provision pushed by Senators BARRASSO and HOEVEN to approve more LNG exports to our NATO allies and to the Ukraine, something that is especially timely in light of what is going on in that part of the world. Now is the ideal time to create more domestic jobs while breaking our allies' dependence on Russian energy supplies.

My amendment also addresses the problems created by ObamaCare. It includes a provision pushed by Senator COLLINS that will restore the 40-hour workweek. It will finally repeal the job-destroying medical device tax, which Senators TOOMEY and HATCH have been tirelessly fighting, which has cost us, by some estimates, 30,000 jobs already in our economy because of this new job-killing tax.

My amendment ensures that veterans and the long-term unemployed are not punished by the costs of the ObamaCare employer mandate. It includes a provision Senator BLUNT has authored that raised this issue in the Senate on behalf of veterans, and in the House a similar bill passed by a vote of 406 to 1. Certainly we can find few Democrats who are willing to provide ObamaCare relief to veterans and the long-term unemployed.

My amendment also provides permanent targeted tax relief to millions of small businesses. Small businesses create 65 percent of all new jobs. Yet this administration has done little more than punish them with more regulations and higher taxes. This amendment makes permanent higher expensing levels, provides capital gains tax relief for investing in small businesses, and expands options to increase cashflow at Main Street businesses across the country. It allows small businesses to deduct more startup costs, and puts the selfemployed on an equal playing field when paying for health care costs.

This amendment also includes commonsense regulatory reform put for-

ward by Senator PORTMAN that will ensure taxpayers know the true cost of new regulations. It requires agencies to conduct a cost-benefit analysis and provide advanced notice of any major new regulations.

Finally, this amendment includes the House-passed SKILLS Act, which Senator SCOTT has introduced as an amendment to the UI bill. Currently, we have 50 Federal worker training programs spread across nine Federal agencies. Many of them are duplicative and few of them have been evaluated for whether or not they are effective. This amendment would combine 35 of those programs into one Workforce Investment Fund that will empower governors to tailor programs to their States and benefit employers and employees alike.

My point simply is that Senate Republicans stand ready to offer more than just the status quo. We understand the long-term unemployed want more than just 20 more weeks of unemployment benefits. They want a job. We understand those who are struggling to adapt in a changing economy want more than a morass of broken worker training programs. They want relevant training that prepares them for the jobs that are in demand today. We understand that low-income families want more than government programs designed to help them just get by. They want more opportunity and a better future for their children. We understand that Main Street businesses across the country cannot afford endless regulations coming from Washington, DC. They want a chance to succeed and to fulfill their American dream.

I am hopeful that at least some of our colleagues on the other side of the aisle understand that basic principle too and will join us in including job-creating measures as part of this 13th extension of emergency unemployment benefits. We can do better for the American people. We should do better by the American people.

We have serious proposals, serious job-creating proposals that don't get a chance to see the light of day because the majority party in the Senate blocks amendments from being offered, blocks amendments from being debated, and blocks amendments from being voted on.

So what do we have. We have the status quo. That means that for the 13th time we have to extend unemployment insurance benefits to people who have been unemployed for way too long because we have failed to put policies in place that are actually good for job creation, that are actually the right types of incentives for our small businesses to hire, that take away the burdensome cost of taxes and regulations that make it more expensive and more difficult for our small businesses to hire, and because we fail to take into consideration the impact that so many of these things we do here in Washington have on hardworking people in this country who are trying to lift

their families into the middle class and to provide a better future for their children and grandchildren.

That is what every American wants. That is what every family in America aspires to. We ought to do something about it. Another meager government check that helps people get by isn't the way to a brighter and better future. The way to a brighter and better future is a good-paying job with an opportunity for advancement. That is what we ought to be focused on, and that is what the provisions I just mentioned, that are included in my amendment, would do.

My amendment incorporates many of the ideas Members on our side have advanced, all with an eye toward creating jobs and growing and expanding the economy in a way that will create those good-paying opportunities and give people a better chance at a better future. So I really hope we will get the chance to vote. We can't, evidently, get individual amendments that have been offered by individual Members voted on, so we have taken a number of ideas and incorporated them into this amendment, an alternative to what is being proposed by the Democrats, which simply treats the symptom of this problem but does nothing to address the underlying cause of the problem.

We want to focus on the problem; we want to focus on the cause; we want to focus on solutions; and we believe the Senate ought to be the place where we have an opportunity to vote on those very solutions. So I encourage my colleagues on both sides to open this process. Let us allow the American people to have their voices heard—not just the voices of a few but the voices of the many people in the Senate who have good ideas about how to create jobs, grow the economy, and build a better future for our children and grandchildren.

Mr. President, I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to speak to the Senate as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CREATING REAL VALUE

Mr. MORAN. Mr. President, in Kansas there is a company called Koch Industries that is an important component of our State, its economy, and many, several thousand Kansans work there. Unfortunately, in the political discourse of our country, Koch Industries and its owners are often subject to attacks.

I happened to be reading the Wall Street Journal this morning, and I no-

ticed a column, an opinion piece written by the chairman of the board of Koch Industries, Charles G. Koch, and I wish to share that with my colleagues today.

It seems to me the things that are outlined in Mr. Koch's opinion piece, while not everyone would agree, they are certainly within the wide mainstream of American thought and certainly reflect opinions that are worthy of debate and discussion in our country and on the Senate floor.

We all bring diversity, a different set of values, opinions, beliefs of political philosophy to the debate on the Senate floor, and I wanted to share one of Koch Industries owner's beliefs about those values and his philosophy and how it affects Americans today.

This is an opinion piece from today's Wall Street Journal written by a Kansan, Charles Koch. Mr. Koch says:

I have devoted most of my life to understanding the principles that enable people to improve their lives. It is those principles—the principles of a free society—that have shaped my life, my family, our company and America itself.

Unfortunately, the fundamental concepts of dignity, respect, equality before law and personal freedom are under attack by the nation's own government. That's why, if we want to restore a free society and create greater well-being and opportunity for all Americans, we have no choice but to fight for those principles. I have been doing so for more than 50 years, primarily through educational efforts. It was only in the past decade that I realized the need to also engage in the political process.

Again, Mr. Koch speaking:

More than 200 years ago, Thomas Jefferson warned that this could happen. "The natural progress of things," Jefferson wrote, "is for liberty to yield and government to gain ground." He knew that no government could possibly run citizens' lives for the better. The more government tries to control, the greater the disaster, as shown by the current health-care debacle. Collectivists (those who stand for government control of the means of production and how people live their lives) promise heaven but deliver hell. For them, the promised end justifies the means. A truly free society is based upon a vision of respect for people and what they value. In a truly free society, any business that disrespects its customers will fail, and deserves to do so. The same should be true of any government that disrespects its citizens. The central belief and fatal conceit of the current administration is that you are incapable of running your own life, but those in power are capable of running it for you. This is the essence of big government and collectivism.

Instead of encouraging free and open debate, collectivists strive to discredit and intimidate opponents. They engage in character assassination. . . . This is the approach that Albert Schopenhauer described in the 19th century, that Saul Alinsky famously advocated in the 20th, and that so many despots have infamously practiced. Such tactics are the antithesis of what is required for a free society—and a telltale sign that the collectivists do not have good answers.

Rather than try to understand my vision for a free society or accurately report the facts about Koch Industries, our critics would have you believe we're "un-American" and trying to "rig the system," that we're against "environmental protection" or eager to "end workplace safety standards."

These falsehoods remind Mr. Koch of the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's observation, "Everyone is entitled to his own opinion, but not to his own facts."

Here are some facts about my philosophy and our company: Koch companies employ 60,000 Americans; who make many thousands of products that Americans want and need. According to government figures, our employees and the 143,000 additional American jobs they support generate \$11.7 billion in compensation and benefits. About one-third of our U.S.-based employees are union members.

Koch employees have earned well over 700 awards for environmental, health and safety excellence since 2009, many of them are from the Environmental Protection Agency and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. EPA officials have commended us for our "commitment to a cleaner environment" and called us "a model for other companies."

Our refineries have consistently ranked among the best in the nation for low per-barrel emissions. In 2012, our Total Case Incident Rate—

That is a safety measure—

was 67% better than a Bureau of Labor Statistics average for peer industries. Even so, we have never rested on our laurels. We believe there is always room for innovation and improvement.

Far from trying to rig the system, I have spent decades opposing cronyism and all political favors, including mandates, subsidies, and protective tariffs—even when we benefit from them. I believe that cronyism is nothing more than welfare for the rich and powerful, and should be abolished. Koch Industries was the only major producer in the ethanol industry to argue for the demise of the ethanol tax credit in 2011. That government handout . . . needlessly drove up food and fuel prices as well as other costs for consumers—many of whom were poor or otherwise disadvantaged.

Mr. Koch says:

Now the mandate needs to go, so that consumers and the marketplace are the ones who decide the future of ethanol.

Instead of fostering a system that enables people to help themselves, America is now saddled with a system that destroys values, raises costs, hinders innovation and relegates millions of citizens to a life of poverty, dependency and hopelessness. This is what happens when elected officials believe that people's lives are better run by politicians and regulators than by the people themselves. Those in power fail to see that more government means less liberty, and liberty is the essence of what it means to be American. Love of liberty is an American ideal. If more businesses (and elected officials) were to embrace a vision of creating real value for people in a principled way, our nation would be far better off—not just today, but for generations to come. I'm dedicated to fighting for that vision. I'm convinced that most Americans believe it's worth fighting for, too.

That is the opinion piece from the Wall Street Journal this morning, written by a Kansan, Charles Koch.

I commend that opinion piece and its thoughts to my colleagues in the Senate.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SESSIONS. Madam President, I come to the floor today to address the unemployment benefits legislation. This legislation is, frankly, an admission that after 5 years of spending more money for costly government stimulus—all of it borrowed—to try to increase employment in America, we still have an unemployment crisis.

Not long ago at the White House, Mr. Sperling said that there are three applicants for every job in America and wages are down. In effect, this legislation is an admission that taxing, spending, regulating, and borrowing has not worked. Indeed, those policies will never work. More regulation, more taxing, more borrowing, and more debt will not improve the economy. We know that. Despite what some so-called experts say, we know that is not a policy that will work, but urgent action is needed.

According to testimony we heard this week in the Budget Committee, if you adjust for the retirement of the baby boomers, the labor force is still short 4.5 million people, the equivalent of \$500 billion in national income lost each year. But the majority has circled their wagons around this spend-and-borrow agenda.

For instance, our friends are blocking a Republican amendment requiring companies to hire legal workers, not unlawful workers. The E-Verify system should be required nationwide. It would simply check the Social Security number of applicants, which would identify many people who have no right to be employed in America because they are not here lawfully. In a time of high unemployment, we ought not to be filling our jobs with people who are not lawful and not lawfully able to work in America, while at the same time financially supporting people who are unemployed in the country. At the same time, congressional Democrats have pushed for a bill that would more than double the future H-1B guest worker visas that are frequently used for offshore jobs.

As ranking member of the Budget Committee, I have to inform my colleagues that this unemployment bill is not honestly paid for, and that it violates the Ryan-Murray budget agreement that was signed into law just over 3 months ago. We said we were not going to spend above a certain amount.

Actually, Ryan-Murray raised the amount the Budget Control Act had limited spending to when we were in a tight fix. I think this year in particular was probably the toughest year under the Budget Control Act, so relief was provided and it raised the spending limits for a fifth year and it helped. Just 3 months ago we reaffirmed those spending limits and said we were not going to go above them.

Yet just this past Monday, the Senate passed the so-called doc fix which

exceeded the Ryan-Murray spending limits by \$6.1 billion this year alone. We adopted a limit, and what do we do? We want to help our doctors, but instead of reducing spending somewhere else in this massive government, we come up with a gimmick argument to say we are paying for it and add, in effect, \$6.1 billion to the expenditures this year. We objected to that, but people voted to waive the budget with an up-or-down vote. Do you want to stick by the agreement we reached 3 months ago or do you want to raise it and spend more? The majority in the Senate voted to spend more, and this is why we have such an extreme debt threat in America today.

The bill that is before us now is the unemployment insurance legislation, which exceeds the 2014 limit on spending by another \$9.9 billion. Our Federal budget is \$3.5 trillion—\$3,500 billion—and we can't find some other reductions if we want to fund a new expenditure, such as unemployment compensation? We can't find someplace that we can tighten our belts and pay for it?

My colleagues say that while spending increases this year, the bill is paid for over the next decade. They promised that although we will spend more this year, a decade later—10 years—we are going to get around to paying for it. There are three major problems with this contention, and we just have to address them so there is no mistake about it. This is not legitimate, and it threatens the financial integrity of the country.

The Ryan-Murray budget deal established spending limits. You cannot get out of those spending limits by raising fees and taxes. Taxing more to spend more was not the deal. The deal in the Budget Control Act said that we are going to reduce the growth in spending. We were on track—over 10 years—to grow spending \$10 trillion. Under the Budget Control Act, we were going to allow spending to increase, but it would only increase \$8 trillion, not \$10 trillion.

Now we are told that the Budget Control Act, which includes the sequester—we can't live with it. Growing and spending \$8 trillion is not enough; we have to grow spending even more. Every time some worthy cause is brought before the Senate, we take the easy way out. We come up with a gimmick pay-for or we just violate the budget and spend the money anyway. What good is it to have a Ryan-Murray budget agreement or a Budget Control Act if nobody adheres to it?

Second, one of the big reasons our country is going broke is the philosophy of “spend today and promise to pay for it tomorrow.” Here is what a new Bloomberg analysis—an independent group—concluded:

Since December 2013 [three months ago] the Republican House and the Democratic Senate have approved more than \$40 billion worth of spending “offsets” in the form of cuts that would take place in 2023 at the earliest or timing shifts in policy to bring savings into the 10-year window . . .

Both of these gimmicks are not legitimate, will not work, and have been criticized by independent groups that are concerned about the future of the Republic.

Third, the promised revenue offsets are phony savings. The offsets come from something called “pension smoothing”—wow, what is “pension smoothing”?—and “prepayment of premiums to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.” These are two popular schemes—double counting and timing shifts—that allow companies to prepay their payments for up to 5 years. In good times companies can pay ahead to the PBGC trust fund and Congress can take the money out the backdoor and spend it on—in this case—unemployment. In bad times this will leave the taxpayer further on the hook if PBGC has to take over a failed pension plan. It is taking money out of the plan that was supposed to be set up to guarantee and insure pensions.

I realize some of this sounds complex, but that is the problem: the big spenders in Washington have turned bilking taxpayers into an art form. Some spend their whole time trying to come up with a gimmick to get around the actual requirement, which is for us to set priorities and to recognize we cannot fund everything we would like to fund.

If we have a new idea for a new program, the Budget Control Act says: OK, do it, but you have to do it within the spending limits. You have to find some spending reduction to justify a new spending increase. That is what we agreed to, and that is what the President of the United States signed into law. He also signed Ryan-Murray into law. Is he here advocating responsible action? No, he is here supporting the Democratic leadership to push these budget-busting provisions and is not properly paying for them. Frankly, that is a disappointment.

The President of the United States is the chief person who talks to the American people. He has yet to look them in the eye and tell them we are on an unsustainable course, and we are going to have to tighten our belts. Instead, every time he talks, he talks about a new spending. A new program that spends more, in essence, is borrowing more and increasing our debt even further.

In the few months since Ryan-Murray was passed, the Senate—driven by a Democratic majority—has passed five bills that busted through the Ryan-Murray limits. There have been five bills that busted the budget. We just agreed to it, and they just voted for it 3 months ago.

They say these are all important measures and we have to pass them, so we should disregard those prior promises we made to the American people. The whole point of a spending limit is to make Congress set priorities. If you feel you have legislation that needs to pass, it is your duty to find a way to pay for it within the limits of spending we agreed to.

This is not a radical concept. This is responsible governance. It is done in cities and States all over America. They are living within their means. They are tightening up their efficiencies in productivity. People holler and wail whenever they make those cuts, but those cities, counties, and States are still standing. They have not been sucked into the ocean. They are still operating. They are going to be leaner, more efficient, and more productive as the result of going through a tight budget time. As money rises, and hopefully the economy bounces back, they will be in a better position in the future to serve the taxpayers of their communities efficiently.

Here are the budget violations in the pending bill, and these budget violations were all confirmed. I am the ranking Republican of the Budget Committee, and the Democratic chairman, Senator MURRAY, is a fine and fair chairman of the committee. Her team has acknowledged these violations of the budget, and as a result, it is subject to a budget point of order. There is not a dispute about what I am saying today.

There is \$9.9 billion in spending in excess of the top-line outlays for fiscal year 2014 set by the Ryan-Murray spending agreement. There is also another violation of the Budget Control Act because there is \$9.9 billion of spending in excess of the Finance Committee's allocations.

The committees have certain allocations. The Finance Committee has a certain allocation, and now it is spending \$9.9 billion more. How much is \$9.9 billion? Well, in Alabama we have a lean State government, and I am proud of it. My State's budget is about \$2 billion. This is \$9.9 billion, and it is in violation of our agreement.

Also, there is a \$10.7 billion increase in long-term deficits in the decade beyond the budget window that is subject to a budget point of order, and that is in violation of the budget.

Ordinarily, we would be able to raise a point of order to enforce all three of these violations. However, two of these points of order were wiped away by a loophole created in the language of the Ryan-Murray legislation. I warned them that it was in there, and I urged my colleagues not to adopt it, but it was adopted anyway. Two of the budget points of order I just mentioned are not subject to floor action and have been eliminated, basically, through the use of the deficit-neutral reserve fund. At the time of the Ryan-Murray deal's consideration, the Budget Committee staff—my staff—did the work and we warned that the 57 deficit-neutral reserve funds in the Ryan-Murray bill would be used to increase spending above the spending limits. We warned that would happen. The way that works is the majority can get around the budget rules that limit spending if they propose to offset new spending with new higher taxes.

So we are witnessing today exactly what I warned would happen: The mi-

nority has lost the procedural tool to block spending increases as long as they pay for it with more taxes.

What we agreed to under the Budget Control Act was that we couldn't spend above this limit, and if we raised taxes, it would be used to reduce the deficit. So now we have been able to switch that around so the raising of taxes is allowed to increase new spending.

These deficit reserve funds have been used by Senator REID and the majority to pass a proposed additional \$13 billion in spending above the caps already. However, the unemployment bill still triggers a long-term deficit point of order because it uses revenue timing shifts to conceal long-term deficit impact. So it is still in violation of the budget, even though two of the points of order are gone.

We do need to look at the long-term deficit picture. It is good that we still at least have that point of order we can raise. We can't just spend today because it fits within the 10-year window and somehow looks OK, when we know in the outyears it is going to add to the deficit of the United States. So the budget drafters and the BCA people have language in to prohibit that, rightly so. The problem is we won't adhere to it.

Last year, we paid our creditors \$221 billion in interest payments—\$221 billion on our roughly \$17 trillion debt. That is a huge amount of money. The Federal highway bill is \$40 billion. Aid to education—a whole bunch of programs we have—\$100 billion in total. The Defense budget is \$500 billion. We paid our creditors last year \$221 billion in interest alone on the debt. That is enough to pay for 172 weeks of unemployment benefits for everyone collecting at the end of last year. Over the course of the next 10 years, according to CBO, we will spend a cumulative \$5.8 trillion in interest payments on our debt. Over the next 10 years, CBO—our accounting firm that tries to do the right thing every day and tells us what is going to happen with our budget—tells us we are going to spend over \$5 trillion, almost \$6 trillion, in interest in the next 10 years—money that could be used to help people, to rebuild our infrastructure, to fix crumbling roads and bridges. At today's levels, that \$5.8 trillion could pay for a great amount of great things.

The CBO also told us that 10 years from today, the 1-year annual interest payment will not be \$221 billion, it will be \$880 billion—\$880 billion, an increase of over \$650 billion in interest payments each year—not one time, but that year alone we will pay \$600 billion more in interest. So how can we fund programs? Isn't it going to crowd out spending we need?

Washington is squandering our national inheritance. We are a nation deeply in debt. I would say to my colleagues that every time you violate our budget limits—because I am not voting for it—every time you add more to the Nation's credit card, you are increasing

the interest burden that is crushing America, and you reduce the amount of money that will be available to spend on whatever program you would like to spend it on as the years go by. Interest costs represent the fastest growing item in our budget. How much money will there be left over for your chosen government projects when our interest payment reaches almost \$1 trillion a year? CBO says that by 2024, it will hit \$880 billion. How many more years will it take, 2 or 3, to reach \$1 trillion?

We must help the unemployed, no doubt about it. We need to help them get better jobs, more jobs, and better pay, and we have to do so without adding more to the debt. That is what is placing a wet blanket over the American economy.

We need to produce more American energy. We can do that.

We need to streamline our Tax Code to lower rates, close loopholes, and boost economic growth. We need to eliminate regulations that are reducing productive activities and sending jobs overseas.

We need to endorse a trade policy that defends the American worker from unfair trade practices. Too much of that is occurring. We don't need to lose a single job to unfair trade practices.

We need an immigration policy that serves the interests of the American worker. At a time of high unemployment, the very idea the Senate would pass a bill that would permanently double the number of guest workers who can enter the country boggles the mind. That, in addition to the fact they would legalize 11 million and increase the annual flow of immigrants into the country from 1 million a year—the most generous of any Nation in the world—to 1.5 million. In effect, under the bill that passed this Senate, we would be providing permanent legal status to about 30 million people in the next 10 years. Our current law allows for 1 million a year—about 10 million over the next 10 years. Is it any wonder people are having a hard time getting a job today?

There is not a tight labor market out there; there is a loose labor market. How do I know? Because wages are going down. If employers are desperate and need more workers and can't find them, why aren't they having to pay higher wages to get good workers?

We have to stand up. The American people need to know what is happening to them.

What is the solution, our colleagues say? Well, unemployment is too high and wages are not going up; let's borrow more money and spend it by sending out unemployment checks to people who are unemployed because somebody illegally here took a job they could have taken.

There is no doubt about this: We need to create and transform the welfare office into an office that transforms the lives of people who are struggling today. We have 40 job programs, at least. We have more than 80 different

means-tested social programs. Those all need to be consolidated. There needs to be one central place where an American who is hurting, who is out of work and needs help, may be given financial help, but also counseled and provided training in the things they might need to get a job. Maybe instead of a subsidy while they're unemployed, individuals need help with transportation to go to work. Maybe they need help relocating to another town where the jobs are readily available.

This idea that we just continue to spend more and more on attempting to help people by giving them money without helping them transform their lives and become productive has to end. In fact, all the means-tested programs all added up amount to more than \$750 billion, which is more than all the other individual programs we spend money on—more than Social Security, more than Medicare, more than Medicaid, more than the Defense Department.

This country has some challenges in front of it. If we would respond with classic American values of hard work, individual responsibility, and our technology and training, we could turn this country around. But we don't have any leadership in that regard. Any change, any suggestions that we would reduce a subsidy program in order to fund job training or even fund unemployment compensation is a nonstarter around here, it appears.

I am worried about where we are. This unemployment insurance violates the budget. We should not pass it. We should do it within the budget and we need to analyze it carefully to make sure we are doing it in a way that actually helps those we intend to help.

I thank the Chair. I yield the floor, and I note the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. LANDRIEU. Mr. President, I came to the floor today with the intention of asking unanimous consent to pass H.R. 3521, which we have heard a lot about on the floor lately between Senator VITTER and Senator SANDERS. This bill would authorize the construction of 27 veterans clinics—2 of them in our State, Louisiana, 1 in Lake Charles and 1 in Lafayette.

It is a long and sad story about why these clinics have not been built. I will get into that in a minute. As you can see, Texas, California, Florida, Georgia, and other States are affected. I know the Senators from those States support what we are trying to do.

Yesterday or the day before, my colleague came to the floor to call me "ineffective." I would like to say that I was a little bit shocked to hear that. I

have been called many things on the floor of this Senate—hardheaded, stubborn, tenacious, the Senator who never quits. I have never been called ineffective, so it was a little bit shocking.

What I can say is that I think I have spent 18 years on the floor of the Senate and here working with colleagues on both sides of the aisle and developing very strong friendships, very good relationships and trusting friendships that I think have accrued in large measure in a very beneficial way to the State I represent and to the region of the country I am also so proud to represent, the gulf coast.

Maybe my colleague was having a bad day. I am going to let it go, but it was a little shocking to hear that word.

Back to the issue. The issue is quite serious. The issue is that we have had a process of building veterans clinics in this country a certain way for a very long time. About 3 years ago CBO kind of out of the blue decided to change the scoring mechanism—instead of the way we were doing it through a leasing process, change the scoring system to cause the budget problem, the constraints in the budget to not allow us to move forward with the construction of these veterans facilities.

But added to that change, what is really happening in Louisiana and why this is such an important issue for us is that we were scheduled to build our two clinics and had waited in line patiently for many years. Our clinics were getting ready to be built in Lafayette and Lake Charles, which are a very important part of our outreach to the tens of thousands of veterans in our State.

The Veterans' Administration itself made a very serious mistake, which they have admitted in writing, verbally. General Shinseki has been down to our State to visit these sites, to talk with many of us in Louisiana about how unfortunate it was that mistakes in the bidding process were made—not by us, not by the State, not by the locals, but by the Federal Government. Because of these mistakes, our process of building these clinics was delayed.

That is why House Member BOUSTANY—a wonderful colleague and a dear friend and a great leader—has been leading the effort. These are basically in his district. He and I have been working very closely to try to bring to the attention of the leadership here the fact that they made the mistake, not us. We should not have to pay the penalty because of that.

Then, in the midst of that fight, this new scoring mechanism came down.

Now we cannot get out from underneath either the offset required or the new process required to get our clinics built. It has nothing to do with need—we are at the top of that list. We have the need. We have the veterans. We have the commitment of the Federal Government to get these built.

All of our delegation has been working very closely to try to get these

clinics built. I am happy to say that I am here today—as I have always been on this issue—supporting it and will ask in just a minute—I wanted to ask but will not ask in just a minute—for unanimous consent to build these clinics without an offset, just as the House bill passed. It is a \$1.6 billion charge. It would move without an offset. That is what the House voted on. It was a huge vote, 346 votes, Republicans and Democrats. I think when we have a vote like that, we need to really pay attention over here. They voted to build these clinics at a cost of \$1.6 billion without an offset.

That is what I am going to ask for. Senator COBURN will object. He has let me know he will object. Unfortunately, because of personal reasons, he is unable to be here today. So out of respect for the process of the Senate and out of courtesy, I will not be asking for that unanimous consent now, but I will be asking for it early next week.

Just to be clear, it will be a unanimous consent to build these 27 clinics based on the House vote without this bill going back to the House, going straight to the President's desk for signature by the President.

The offset the Senator from Louisiana offered is a bogus offset. We have a letter from CBO that I would like to read into the RECORD. The junior Senator from Louisiana offered his offset to supposedly raise the \$1.6 billion that will pay for this. This is from the CBO analysis.

It says: Based on preliminary estimates of the amendment offered by Senator VITTER, based on the information of the Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs and their current practices and joint purchases of prescription drugs, I do not estimate any savings for drug purchases relative to current law. My preliminary estimate of the amendment would be a minimal discretionary cost of less than \$500,000.

There is no money to be saved by the amendment offered by Senator VITTER, so I would be offering the bill to build these clinics with no offset, and that is what the House passed. It will go directly to the President's desk, and we will resolve the problem for these States. Then we will finally figure out a way to get back on track building clinics that we need and figure out a way to pay for these clinics in the future, but these clinics got stuck in kind of a technical bureaucratic mess in the recalculation. Ours, in particular, were caught because they should have been built in the 2 years before this new scoring process came to be, which is why Louisiana is having a particularly difficult time.

But as the record will show, our entire delegation has supported this effort. I honor the leadership of Congressman BOUSTANY from the House, who has literally worked on this tirelessly for 6 years. I thank the House delegation for sending this bill over.

I will not require an offset. The offset Senator VITTER offered is bogus.

As soon as Senator COBURN can get back, which will be early next week, I will be offering this unanimous consent. Unfortunately, I understand he will object to it because he believes we should find a way to pay for it. There might be other objections as well, but I am looking forward to the debate with Senator COBURN next week.

I yield the floor and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Ms. HIRONO). The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GM RECALL

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, yesterday's hearing of the commerce committee's subcommittee on consumer safety provided a powerful and important moment in our legislative process, and I want to thank my colleague, the chairman of that subcommittee, Chairman MCCASKILL, for enabling us to come together, as well as my other colleagues on both sides of the aisle, Senators KLOBUCHAR and BOXER and AYOTTE, for their very insightful and significant questions and comments on a challenge that should unite us on both sides of the aisle—the tragic events, death and life-changing injuries to unsuspecting drivers who were victims of a defective ignition switch in automobiles manufactured by GM; a car defect that should have been fixed, disclosed, and remedied before these deaths occurred.

I want to thank the families of the victims of these defective cars for coming forward and being at that hearing yesterday and sharing their stories with me and others. They are doing a great public service through their courage and strength.

I want to also thank Mary Barra, the CEO of GM. As I said to her then, and I will repeat now, I admire her fortitude and her service in coming forward to face the questions of our committee and be the face of General Motors on the issues that confront us now in car safety. I admire her career at GM—an engineer who has risen through the ranks, a second-generation employee at an iconic, great American manufacturing company.

I have long admired that company and the products it has produced. They have enriched the lives of so many Americans over the years. My hope is this hearing and this process will be a turning point for the company in facing these car safety challenges.

I admire greatly also its dealers and employees. Some of them have contacted me, especially Connecticut dealers, telling me how they are reaching out proactively to the drivers of these defective vehicles, asking them to bring them to their company so they can be repaired before they do further damage.

This great company can reclaim its iconic brand and luster by breaking with its past, and Mary Barra has the opportunity for this historic contribution. As I said to her yesterday, she may be surrounded by a phalanx of lawyers and public relations people who will advise her to be cautious, to be timid, and to be reactive, but now is the time for her to seize the initiative and take three simple steps as a beginning.

No. 1, establish a compensation fund for all who have suffered damage from this defective ignition switch which caused cars to crash, some of them to burn—victims who have suffered injuries and death as well as economic damage. No. 2, provide a warning—a clear, strong warning—to drivers still behind the wheels of vehicles that still have this defective ignition switch. The cars are under recall but unrepaired. People are still driving them, many not knowing the full risk they have undertaken by continuing to drive. A strong warning to ground those vehicles until they are repaired is what is needed now.

Third, support our legislation. Senator MARKEY and I have offered legislation that would provide for better reporting by car companies, a stronger accountability system, and better disclosure through a database to consumers so they will know what the risks are before they take them and can make informed choices about what they drive and when.

These steps are well warranted by the past misconduct of GM, but they are also potentially a model for other companies in doing the right thing—facing the truth, telling truth to power, and making sure innocent consumers are protected against harms that may not be known to them.

She had the opportunity to break with the past culture—a culture of deniability and of deception. Deception is what happened at GM. These ignition switches were known to be defective. As early as 2001, year after year there were reliable and material facts indicating to GM it had a responsibility to fix these vehicles. Yet they took no action to repair them, to recall them, to inform consumers. And the fix was not a major costly one. It was \$2 per vehicle—easily done. Yet in 2005, 2006, GM made a business decision that the price was too high, the time was too long, and it continued to provide those vehicles for sale to consumers.

Then it deceived the U.S. Government. I have already spoken on the floor about section 612 of the agreement GM signed that indicated there were no material adverse facts at the time it was bailed out in 2009 as part of the reorganization. That deception is bad enough, but what happened as a result of that reorganization was a shield from liability, a form of immunity against legal accountability granted only because GM failed to disclose to the United States and to the bankruptcy court that it might well be lia-

ble and in fact was responsible for these defective vehicles. That shield from liability still bedevils the victims of injuries, death, and economic damage as they seek to hold GM accountable because GM itself is invoking that shield in courts today around the country and seeking to dismiss actions brought against it, seeking to return them to the bankruptcy court where the black hole of discharge will prevent recovery.

I welcome the independent investigation GM has undertaken by a very credible and respected former U.S. attorney. I welcome the appointment of consultant Ken Feinberg, also well respected, with experience and expertise in providing compensation. But GM itself has still said there is no compensation fund and it will not commit to one. And as able as these two individuals are, the question remains, what will it take? What facts or evidence will be required to persuade GM to do the right thing?

I think there is more than ample evidence—in fact, abundant evidence now—as to what the path should be, and I urged it yesterday on Mary Barra. GM should very simply do the right thing now: Establish a compensation fund sufficient to seek to make these victims whole. Nothing will erase or even ease the pain and grief suffered by these families and loved ones, but justice has its own virtue. GM has the rare opportunity in American corporate life to do justice and not wait for its consultants and its investigators to “work through the issues here.” Working through the issues here means doing right by those victims.

Yesterday I asked Ms. Barra about the safety of the vehicles still on the road. She assured me they were fine to drive—as long as the key was not overloaded, as long as the ignition switch was used alone without additional keys. She assured me there was no more risk to drive one of those vehicles than any other in use today.

I asked her about the contradiction of that statement with the recall notice itself. I am going to display it here. It says that these vehicles are risky to drive, in effect, if your keyring is carrying added weight or—and I emphasize that it is an “or”—there are rough road conditions or jarring or impact-related events.

Unfortunately, too many of our highways and our byways have rough road conditions or provide the opportunity for jarring events.

Ms. Barra may believe tests and analyses done by her company she referred to yesterday assured her and GM that driving these defective vehicles is safe as long as it is done with only the ignition key, without the added weight of additional keys, but she must know, because she has children—as do I and most Members of this body—that they will drive with additional keys on that ignition switch. In fact, hundreds of thousands—millions of Americans have no idea that driving these vehicles with

added keys provides that kind of potentially fatal risk. When these cars lose power, they lose steering, they lose their brakes, and they lose their airbags. Losing power, brakes, and steering is terrifying, but airbags are essential if power is lost and the car crashes, as victims of these crashes have discovered, to their sorrow and the grief of their families.

This kind of pothole, a rough road condition, a potentially jarring event—how common are they? This photograph is from Surf Avenue in Stratford, a beautiful town along the coast of Connecticut. I could take hundreds of these photographs from Connecticut, which has better roads than many other places in our State or country. They are as common as the roads themselves.

Those risks are GM's responsibility to warn. It has failed to do so. I asked Ms. Barra what evidence or facts would persuade her to issue a stronger warning. The recall notice itself said that risk increases if your keyring is carrying added weight—such as more keys or the key fob itself; the key fob alone adds additional weight—or your vehicle is experiences rough road conditions or other jarring or impact-related events. What would persuade her to issue this warning to consumers: Stop driving these cars until they are repaired.

I specifically asked her whether evidence about drivers who have, in fact, experienced the power loss without adding additional weight to their keyrings—if they encountered these kinds of conditions and their cars shut down—would persuade her to change her view. She answered to me:

Senator, if I had any data, any incidents where with just the key, or the key and the ring, there was any risk, I would ground these vehicles across the country.

Ms. Barra, let me tell you about Laura Valle. In March of 2014, Ms. Valle, who owns a 2007 silver Chevrolet Cobalt, received GM's recall letter instructing her to remove all items from her keyring, leaving only the vehicle key. As the recall notice instructed, she continued to drive her vehicle using only the vehicle key. Yet, while driving with a friend, she lost power. Fortunately, she was on the right side of the road and she was able to pull the vehicle to a stop.

There will be other instances. I know they will come forward to me, to my colleagues, and to lawyers who may represent them.

Today I call on GM to issue that warning. There is more than ample evidence or, as Ms. Barra said, "data," "incidents" where the key or just the key and the ring led to the vehicle stopping not because there was added weight but because they encountered rough road conditions or jarring events, which could consist of simply leaving the wrong way or the driver's knee moving.

These vehicles create unacceptable risks before they are repaired. The advice GM should give to people is this:

Bring these cars to be repaired immediately. Stop driving them. In the meantime, use the loaners GM has offered.

GM has the opportunity to avoid another business decision. It may be more costly to provide loaners, but in the long run they will save lives and dollars.

Finally, I ask GM to do the right thing again by supporting the legislation Senator MARKEY and I have introduced. This legislation is critically important to the future. It can't correct the past, but it can make sure that accidents are reported; that defects are made known to the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration; and that there are not only incentives for reporting but there is increased accountability for failing to do so; and require NHTSA to establish a publicly accessible, searchable database that will allow drivers and consumer safety advocates to connect the dots. Companies that are unwilling to connect those dots will be brought to justice, will be required to recall these vehicles and find out about defective models in time to save lives.

Ms. Barra has not yet committed to supporting this bill. In my view, it is her responsibility to do so. It is the responsibility of GM to take this action now. She and GM have the opportunity to change corporate culture not only in that company but in others by setting a model—leading by example, not by their words at a Senate hearing or letters of apology but by action. Action speaks louder than words. Action speaks louder than the appointment of a consultant or an investigator whose report may not be made fully public.

Ms. Barra was unwilling to make that commitment yesterday. It is a corporate culture that refused to make a 57-cent change to car ignitions—or a \$2 change—even though that change would have saved lives. Now is the time to hold GM accountable, for GM to issue that warning that will help save others from a fate known only too well by those families who came to be with us yesterday.

I look forward to working with Ms. Barra, GM, my colleagues, and with all who are interested in improving car safety and to using this sad, tragic, unfortunate experience as a turning point and a teaching moment—a rare moment—of bipartisan action to make our roads safer.

Thank you, Madam President.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from South Carolina.

Mr. SCOTT. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Madam President.

I rise today to discuss my two amendments to the legislation we have been debating this week. I think most of us would agree we need to give folks a hand up. That makes a lot of sense. But we also need to ensure they have a solid foundation on which it stands. The best way we can help the unemployed is to help them find a job. My amendments aim to do just that. First, we will restore the 40-hour workweek which was destroyed by ObamaCare. The employer mandate currently requires employers to provide health insurance to full-time employees, and the new definition of a full-time employee is 30 hours per workweek. As a result, employers are cutting hours for many of the employees to fewer than 30 hours per week.

I have heard from several employers at home in South Carolina, representing institutions as large as Clemson University and as small as the local surf shop that are suffering the consequences of this new 30-hour definition.

A few weeks ago I was on a bus in Charleston talking with some of my constituents. I started speaking with one young man who had just moved to South Carolina from Georgia looking for new opportunities. He worked for a restaurant and had recently received notice that his hours were getting cut. After talking with this young man for a few minutes, it became very clear to me that his pay was cut and his hours were dwindling as a direct result of the 30-hour rule. Not only was he losing 25 percent of his pay, he was losing the ability to work overtime.

According to the Hoover Institution, 2.6 million Americans are especially at risk of having their hours and wages cut like the young man with whom I was speaking. Of those 2.6 million Americans, 59 percent of them are between the ages of 19 and 34, 63 percent are women, and 90 percent do not have a college degree. Further, families most at risk are those with a median income, \$29,126.

Many of these millions of Americans who are earning hourly wages to support their family will see a 25-percent cut in their pay as employers struggle with the massive new costs forced on them by the Federal Government—their Federal Government. Thanks to ObamaCare, not only will these workers not have health insurance but they will no longer have full-time jobs. We must—and I want to emphasize we must—restore the 40-hour workweek, period.

My second amendment is the same as my SKILLS Act which I introduced as a part of my opportunity agenda earlier this year. It provides much needed reforms to modernize the government's bureaucratic means of workforce development and training programs. With 4 million jobs currently unfilled across our Nation today, including 65,000 jobs in South Carolina, job skills training is critical for folks looking for work. We have to make sure people are prepared

for continued success, and that starts with education and workforce training.

Thanks to the leadership of my colleague, Mrs. FOXF in the House, the SKILLS Act has already passed with some Democratic support on the other side of the Capitol. It is well past time for that to happen in the Senate, and I hope my colleagues will join me in providing more skills and more opportunities to develop the skills to put Americans back to work.

This is truly a conversation about jobs. How do we encourage job growth and stop the government from blocking job creation? It is a simple answer. These two amendments are steps in the right direction. Let's not let politics dictate the future of these two amendments. We can do better, and we should.

Thank you, Madam President, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that at 2:30 p.m. today all postcloture time on the Reed of Rhode Island amendment No. 2874 be considered expired; that the following amendments be withdrawn: Nos. 2875, 2877, 2878; that Senator SESSIONS or designee then be recognized to raise a point of order against the Senator REED of Rhode Island amendment No. 2874; once the budget point of order is raised, Senator MURRAY or designee be recognized to make a motion to waive; the Senate then proceed to vote on the motion to waive; if the motion to waive is agreed to, the Senate then proceed to vote on adoption of the Reed of Rhode Island amendment No. 2874; that upon disposition of the Reed amendment, the Senate proceed to vote on the motion to invoke cloture on H.R. 3979; that if cloture is invoked on the bill, no other amendments or motions be in order to the bill; that at 5:30 p.m. on Monday, April 7, all postcloture time be considered expired and the bill as amended, if amended, be read a third time and the Senate proceed to vote on passage of the bill, as amended, if amended.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Washington.

THE MINIMUM WAGE

Mrs. MURRAY. There are a number of women who are going to be joining me today. They are leaders in this Capitol who are working each and every day, both here and back in their home States, to give more of their constituents a chance to succeed. Today we are here to talk about one small idea that stands to make a huge difference in the lives of our constituents, and for women in particular, and that is the idea that if you are putting in 40 or 50 or 60 hours of work per week you should be able to put food on your table and pay your bills, and you won't be stuck below the poverty line.

This idea could change the lives of millions of Americans if Congress simply acted and raised the minimum

wage. We need to act now because right now one in four women—one in four women—is making minimum wage today. That is 15 million American women who are making the equivalent of about 2 gallons of gas per hour. Are we prepared to tell them that should be enough to support themselves and their kids?

In fact, as I am sure you will hear repeated by others today, nearly two-thirds of those who earn minimum wage or less are women. This is coming at a time when more women are now depended upon as the sole income earners in their families. Right now in cities and towns across America there are millions of those women who are getting up at the crack of dawn for work every day. They are stuck living in poverty. They cannot save for a car, much less a house. They cannot pay for school so they can get better skills and a better paying job. They cannot even afford to provide their children with more winter clothes or basic medical care. That is not how it is supposed to work in America, the country where you are told if you work hard and play by the rules you can get ahead.

So when we talk about the minimum wage, let's be clear: Raising the minimum wage is about bringing back our middle class. I am proud that in my State of Washington we are taking the lead. In our State our workforce enjoys the highest minimum wage in the country, and I am glad to point out to all of our friends on the other side of the aisle, Washington State's economy has not been negatively impacted by our high minimum wage. In fact, our economy has benefited from a high minimum wage.

Job growth has continued at a rate above the national average. Payrolls in our restaurants and bars have expanded due to people having more money in their pockets to spend at dinner or a night on the town, and poverty in Washington State has trailed the national level for at least 7 years now. That is why I support making the national minimum wage \$10.10 for families from Washington to Wisconsin, from Massachusetts to Minnesota and Hawaii and everywhere in-between.

It is not enough to make you rich, but it is a small raise for millions of families who desperately need it. It is a small raise for moms and dads who need help. We have to do more. Today, two-thirds of families rely on income from both parents, but thanks to our outdated Tax Code, a woman thinking about reentering the workforce as a second earner in her family may face higher tax rates than her husband. That is unfair, and it has to change.

Last week I introduced the 21st Century Worker Tax Cut Act which will help solve that problem by giving struggling two-earner families with children a tax deduction on that second earner's income.

My hope is that over the coming weeks we can all come together in this Chamber on behalf of millions of Amer-

ican women who—like my own mother when I was growing up—are the sole caregiver and breadwinner in their families.

I hope our colleagues have gotten a sense of how the current \$7.25 an hour translates to a grocery trip for a family of four, shopping for school supplies or even how it impacts people's daily commutes.

That is why we are here today—to give that mom or that dad a fair shot at succeeding in America. I am proud to be joined today by a number of my colleagues in the Senate who are strong women and fighting for women and men in their home States.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. (Mr. SCHATZ). The Senator from Wisconsin.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, when my grandparents were raising me, I learned that if you work hard and play by the rules, you should be able to get ahead. As I traveled throughout the State of Wisconsin meeting with Wisconsinites I know that my fellow Wisconsinites learned that very same thing when they were growing up. Today people are working as hard as ever, and they deserve to get ahead, but many are working full time and even two jobs to make ends meet. Yet far too many are just barely getting by or living in poverty.

As I have traveled my State, Wisconsinites have told me that the powerful and the well-connected seem to get to write all of their own rules, while the concerns and struggles of the working poor and middle-class families go unnoticed here in Washington. They feel like our economic system is tilted towards those at the very top and that our political system exists to protect those unfair advantages. The House budget introduced by Congressman PAUL RYAN—from my own home State—is a perfect example of that. Instead, we should make sure that everybody gets a fair shot.

I am really proud to join my colleagues this afternoon to deliver our own call for action. It is simple. The time is now to give hard-working Americans a raise. We can do that if both parties work together to reward hard work so an honest day's work pays more. We can do that by raising the minimum wage.

I believe we need to build a fairer economy and grow the middle class. I believe our economy is strongest when we expand opportunity for everyone, and that is why I am an original co-sponsor of the Minimum Wage Fairness Act. Raising the minimum wage would improve the economic security of families across the country and strengthen the overall economy. It would give 28 million American workers a raise—including over 595,000 Wisconsinites—and will benefit more than a quarter million Wisconsin children who would have at least one parent getting that raise.

It would mean workers in Wisconsin would have \$816 million more to spend

in local businesses, which according to the Economic Policy Institute would boost Wisconsin's GDP by \$516.6 million and generate 1,800 new jobs after only 3 years.

Because women are disproportionately low-wage workers—making up two-thirds of low-wage workers in the country—raising the minimum wage would also directly impact millions of women across America.

Nadine, from Appleton, WI, would directly benefit from a raise. Nadine is a 20-year-old woman who makes the tipped minimum wage. She works as a server in a family restaurant. I probably need to remind some people that the tipped minimum wage is only \$2.13 an hour. Nadine got her first job at age 14 so she could start saving for college. She started college but had stopped attending because she simply could not afford it. She even moved from her small hometown to a larger city in search of a better job so she would be able to return to school.

In telling her story, Nadine writes:

Raising the minimum wage is not an abstract notion in my life. It is a real factor that affects me in several important ways. First, and most importantly, it is important to me because I am a young woman and I am working to support myself. I had to put going to college on hold because I couldn't afford it. Without a higher income, I worry I won't ever be able to transition from dead-end jobs into a long-term career.

Nadine currently averages \$200 to \$300 per week. She spends \$50 on gas every week because she can't afford a more fuel-efficient car. She eats simply in order to budget \$30 each week for food. The rest of her income goes to rent and other bills. Needless to say, it doesn't go far.

Nadine picks up every shift available to her and doesn't rely on government assistance of any kind. She worries she will never be able to experience having a family and finishing college, traveling, and just having a fair shot at building a stronger future for herself.

Women such as Nadine make up 72 percent of workers in predominately tipped occupations. Workers in tipped occupations are twice as likely as other workers to experience poverty, and servers are almost three times as likely to be in poverty.

If for no other reason, we need to raise the minimum wage because in America no one who works full time should have to live or raise a family in poverty. Raising the full minimum wage and the tipped wage will give 15 million women a raise—including 330,000 in my State of Wisconsin. Women who make up 80 percent of America's 2.8 million working single parents would benefit from an increase in the minimum wage, thereby reducing child poverty among female-headed households.

According to the Center for American Progress, raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour would reduce dependence on government programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which we com-

monly call SNAP, which would see nearly 3.5 million fewer enrollments and save \$46 billion over the decade. Raising the minimum wage will help make progress towards closing the gender pay gap.

I look forward to getting the job done and reward the hard work of women across our great country.

I look forward to getting the job done and passing the Minimum Wage Fairness Act so American women will get the raise they deserve.

I yield back.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from California.

Mrs. BOXER. Mr. President, I am so proud to join Senator MURRAY, who organized several of the women here, to speak out in favor of the minimum wage increase for the workers of America.

My colleagues have said it well, but it bears repeating: No one in America—male or female—should have to live in poverty after putting in a full day's work. Yet that is the case today.

We should give hard-working Americans a fair shot to get ahead so they can raise their families. Everyone deserves that fair shot, and that is why Democrats have a fair-shot agenda. Right now we don't seem to have many Republicans joining us in our desire to raise the minimum wage so that it gets people above the poverty line when they work full time.

I would argue that anyone who votes against that level of pay—which is about \$10.10 an hour to get a worker right above poverty—simply wants to keep people in poverty, and that is not the American way. Right now a mom who is working full time and makes minimum wage earns just \$290 a week. That is just \$15,000 a year, which is below the poverty rate for a single mom.

No mom or dad should come home from a full day's work and have to worry about whether they can feed their children or whether they can afford a roof over the heads of their kids.

I see Senator WARREN is here, and she has brought such attention and focus to the unfairness in the number I am about to say. There are 400 families in America that control as much wealth as 150 million Americans. To hear people in this Chamber—who do just fine supporting their families—oppose the minimum wage is absolutely, in my view, a morally wrong position. They have their right to it, but I think it is morally wrong.

The minimum wage is a two-thirds problem for women. Let's be clear. Almost two-thirds of workers earning minimum wage or less are women, two-thirds of tipped minimum wage workers are women, and in two-thirds of American families, women are the breadwinners or co-breadwinners. We have a two-thirds problem. Women are overrepresented in low-wage jobs, and that is why I am so proud that next week Senator MIKULSKI is going to lead us toward equal pay for equal work. It

is a wonderful bill. I think it is called the Paycheck Fairness Act.

When we lift the salaries of these workers, it helps entire families. Senator HARKIN's bill, which we are all supporting, will benefit 14 million children. We have to do it for workers like Wendy Arellano, who works directing vehicles at an airport and has two other jobs, but she still doesn't make enough to support her two daughters.

We should do it for women like Shareeka Elliot, who works all night as a janitor scrubbing the floors and cleaning the toilets but still doesn't make enough to get her kids above the poverty line.

We should do it for women like Nyah Potts, who is working so hard to finish her college degree, but she is struggling to make enough to support herself and her son. I joined Nyah at a press conference last week.

In closing, I want to talk for a minute about the tipped minimum wage. This is a disgrace because the tipped minimum wage at the Federal Government is \$2.13 an hour. We all know—because it has been studied—that there are waitresses and there are waiters, and most of the less-expensive restaurants hire women, and they don't get big tips. If there is a storm, and suppose nobody comes into the restaurant that day, they get paid \$2.13 an hour. This bill does move us up to 70 percent of minimum wage for tipped workers. Personally, I think there ought to be no difference. In California, we pay our workers—all of them, tipped or not—the full minimum wage. And no one can tell me that California's restaurants are suffering. They are some of the most successful in the country and in the world.

So let's be clear. History shows raising the minimum wage doesn't hurt the economy.

Now we will hear our colleagues on the Republican side cite the CBO study that said we could lose hundreds of thousands of jobs. That study is an outlier.

In 1956, the minimum wage was a buck. I hate to say it, but I remember those days. It was a dollar. And I remember, I worked my first job as a telephone operator for Hilton Hotels, and I earned the minimum wage. Actually, then, because I was a teenager, it was half the minimum wage, so I worked for 50 cents an hour. I was not very good at that job, but I tried hard. But let's say Congress had that attitude then: We are not going to raise the minimum wage because we will lose jobs. The minimum wage would still be a dollar an hour. How ludicrous.

Since then—since 1956—we have raised the minimum wage 18 times. Guess what. Did we lose jobs? No. The economy grew by more than 80 million jobs.

I know others are waiting to speak. I am so excited to finally get to vote on paycheck fairness and on minimum wage. All we Democrats are saying is, let's give Americans a fair shot.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alabama.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, I will be making a point of order in a moment against the bill before us because it violates the budget we agreed to. I will share briefly for a few moments—the order is that we are to commence voting at 2:30. I believe that is correct. I think I was approved for 5 minutes. If the Chair would notify me when my time is up, because others I see here might want to speak.

In August of 2001, this Congress—House and Senate, Republicans and Democrats—along with the President of the United States, agreed on the Budget Control Act. It limited spending—the growth of spending only. How much did it limit the growth? Well, at that time we were projected to spend \$10 trillion more over the next 10 years than we were currently spending. So the Budget Control Act didn't cut the budget, really, although a few agencies in the short term have had reductions, Defense being the primary one. But over the 10 years, under the Budget Control Act we would grow spending \$8 trillion instead of \$10 trillion—not enough of a reduction in spending, I say to my colleagues, to cause this country to sink into the ocean; that is for sure. Really, not enough, because our deficits are so high.

In December of last year, this Congress passed the Ryan-Murray Budget Act which amended the spending agreement we struck in the Budget Control Act. The Ryan-Murray bill broke the budget agreement and allowed more money to be spent than we had agreed to in the BCA, but it capped overall spending for the next 8 years. So that was the agreement. It passed, and the President signed it 3 months ago. It is now the law of the land.

What I would say to my colleagues is this—today is the third or fourth time we will vote on legislation, since the Ryan-Murray spending agreement passed, that busts the budget—that busts the spending limits we agreed to.

There are multiple budget violations against this bill. Two of them are voided by loophole language in the Ryan-Murray legislation that people didn't fully understand at that time. That loophole language allows the use of a deficit-neutral reserve fund to, in effect, erase budget points of order. So two of the budget points of order that lie against this bill cannot be raised because a deficit-neutral reserve fund—which I think is a gimmick—essentially erases them. But one of the violations still remains, because this bill will add to the debt outside the 10-year window.

One of the things we have learned is that when we pass laws today that sound good—and sometimes those laws, even if they are within the budget window, they may, indeed, in the out years add to the debt of the United States. Kent Conrad, a Democrat and former chairman of the Budget Committee—it

was his language that created this long term point of order, because he was concerned we were passing things that might be OK within the budget window but were adding to the debt in the long term. So that is why we have this point of order.

The cost estimate from the Congressional Budget Office clearly shows that this UI bill violates that principle of the budget, and lays out the numbers that so say. Our chairman of the Budget Committee, Senator MURRAY, has acknowledged that this bill does, in fact, violate the budget.

But we need to stay within our budget. Violating the budget agreement is simply a refusal to make tough choices. We spend \$3,700 billion a year, and we can't find \$8 billion or \$9 billion in savings to fund a program that we think needs to be funded today like unemployment insurance? People want to deal with that and help people who are unemployed, and I understand that desire. But if we do so, we should do it by finding offsets, not spending more than we agreed.

People say we can raise taxes to pay for the new spending. Well, that violates the budget too, because our agreement says we can spend only so much. And if my colleagues want to raise taxes, I believe we ought to use that money to pay down the deficit, not grow the government.

This past year, we spent \$233 billion on interest on the debt, an amount that is virtually half the Defense budget. The highway bill is \$40 billion. In 10 years, the Congressional Budget Office—Dr. Elmendorf testified before the Budget Committee a few weeks ago—says that in 10 years, 1 year's interest payment on the debt of the United States of America would be \$880 billion. That is over \$650 billion more in 1 year on interest than we are paying today.

So you can see why we have to adhere to our promises to contain spending. We cannot continue to vote time and time again to violate the spending limits we agreed to. It just adds to the debt and to our interest payments on the debt. No wonder the American people are unhappy with us. This is irresponsible. I am confident we can find the \$9 billion or whatever we need to fund any program in this bloated government of ours. But, no, it won't even be discussed. There is no discussion about finding honest reductions in spending from places where money is wasted. Instead, we just come up with a plan that gimmicks the spending and adds to the long-term debt of the United States.

In conclusion, I would say it is quite clear that this legislation—the unemployment extension—will add to the long-term debt of the United States.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has spoken for 5 minutes.

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, the pending measure, amendment No. 2874 to H.R. 3979, the vehicle for the unemployment insurance extension, violates section 311(b) of the fiscal year 2009

budget resolution by causing a net increase in the deficit over \$5 billion in the 10-year period from 2024 to 2033.

Therefore, I raise a point of order against this measure pursuant to section 311(b) of S. Con. Res. 70, the Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for fiscal year 2009.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Washington.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, pursuant to section 904 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and the waiver provisions of applicable budget resolutions, I move to waive all applicable sections of that act and applicable budget resolutions for purposes of the pending amendment, and I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The yeas and nays are ordered.

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the vote occur at the time set under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The Senator from Hawaii.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent for an extension of time for 6 minutes to be divided equally between myself and Senator STABENOW.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. HIRONO. Mr. President, I will keep my remarks short because I know there are others who want to speak on why we need to raise the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$10.10. I will focus on Hawaii.

In Hawaii, nearly 100,000 women would get a raise if we were to do this. That is one out of five women workers in Hawaii. The Presiding Officer and I are both from Hawaii. We know the high cost of living in Hawaii. Minimum wage amounts to about \$14,500 a year. The average rent for a one-bedroom residence in Hawaii is almost \$1,300 a month. That is more than \$15,000 a year. It is no wonder people in Hawaii have to work more than one job.

In Hawaii, tourism is our No. 1 industry. We have a lot of tipped workers. They work in our restaurants. Do my colleagues know there are many people who work in our restaurants who can't even afford to eat in the restaurant in which they work?

When we raise the minimum wage, we are going to enable a lot of families to not have to rely on various programs such as SNAP. In Hawaii, over 15,000 workers would no longer need these kinds of benefits.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. HIRONO). The Senator from Michigan.

Ms. STABENOW. Madam President, first let me say that we should be congratulating everyone who has gotten us to a point where we are going to be able to help people who have been

working hard to find a job and still have not found a job to put food on the table for their families and pay their rent. To be able to allow them to receive emergency unemployment assistance is incredibly important. The votes we are doing here are very important to give people who want a job and need a job a fair shot to be able to survive until they can get a job.

THE MINIMUM WAGE

I also want to speak for just a moment, as so many of my colleagues have today, about what it means for women to have a pay raise through the minimum wage because the minimum wage is very much a women's issue, as you have heard, because a disproportionate number of folks who are earning the minimum wage are, in fact, women. And it is not college students; the average age is about 30, 35 years old.

This is a critical issue for Michigan families, including 416,000 women in Michigan who would directly benefit from raising the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour and another 141,000 whose wages would also increase. This is not just about people earning the minimum wage; it is about lifting up wages, increasing purchasing power, and helping businesses large and small be able to get more customers because people can buy things because they have money in their pockets.

Let me repeat, in terms of the numbers for Michigan, 557,000 women in Michigan who are working hard and just want a fair shot—just a fair shot—to get ahead would benefit from the legislation the Senate will soon be voting on called the Minimum Wage Fairness Act.

Too many people, including far too many women, are simply trying to stay afloat, let alone get ahead. The minimum wage used to be worth more. Its value has eroded since it peaked back in 1968, and it is harder and harder for people to put food on the table and a roof over their family's heads.

Today, a single mom can clean houses and scrub floors for 40 hours a week—working hard—and still find that she earns less than the poverty level. There is something wrong with that. If you are going to work hard 40 hours a week, you ought to be able to lift your family out of poverty.

Work ought to be valued in this country. In fact, for a family of three, you are \$4,000 below the poverty line if you are working for the minimum wage. It is just not right.

To add insult to injury, if you compare that to the average CEO's salary today, you could put 933 minimum-wage workers, 933 women working hard—and I would daresay maybe harder than the folks who are at the top as CEOs—trying to put food on the table for their kids, buy them cloths, make sure they can care for them, 933 minimum-wage workers combined equals the salary of the average CEO.

So I would urge that we come together and look at this as Henry Ford

did 100 years ago in 1914 when he doubled the salary of his workers to \$5 a day. He lifted them up. The small businesses around his plant saw increases in their business and hired more people because more people had money in their pockets. They could come in and buy the food and goods.

We are talking about people working hard, again, every single day—moms who are cleaning hotel rooms and are on their feet all day; they are mopping floors, preparing food; they go home; they take care of their families. All they want is a fair shot to succeed and be able to make their lives and their children's lives better.

Let's have a strong, bipartisan vote on raising the minimum wage.

Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, I rise in support of increasing the minimum wage. Congress needs to do away with wages that don't reward hard work and workplace policies that belong in an episode of "Mad Men." This Congress needs to do two things to make sure we give a fair shot to everyone and build a stronger middle class: raise the minimum wage and pass the Paycheck Fairness Act.

The minimum wage is at an historic all-time low. It has lost 30 percent of its buying power compared to its peak buying power in 1968. The minimum wage only pays \$15,000 a year. That is \$4,000 below the poverty line for a family of three. Increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 per hour would pay \$20,200 a year—lifting that family of three out of poverty.

What does increasing the minimum wage mean for Maryland? Increasing the minimum wage will give 450,000 workers in Maryland a raise. Increasing the minimum wage will improve the lives of 210,000 Maryland children because their parent just got a raise. When we raise the minimum wage, we all move a rung up on the opportunity ladder.

I am on the side of economic fairness and building a stronger middle class to bring opportunities to families across the Nation. That is why I am an enthusiastic cosponsor of the Fair Minimum Wage Act. This bill raises the minimum wage from \$7.25 per hour to \$10.10 an hour over 3 years and indexes the minimum wage to inflation in the future.

Everyone who works hard and plays by the rules deserves a fair shot at the American dream. That means raising the minimum wage so that hard work is worth it—because a full-time job shouldn't mean full time poverty.

The minimum wage for employees who earn tips is barely over \$2 per hour. The Fair Minimum Wage Act will slowly increase that base wage by less than \$1 a year until it reaches 70 percent of the regular minimum wage. Women are nearly three-quarters of workers earning tips at their jobs. For a hotel housekeeper in the western Maryland mountains, a hairdresser on the Eastern Shore, or a restaurant server in Baltimore or Bethesda, this

raise is economic security so that a slow week in an off-peak season doesn't mean below-poverty wages.

The minimum wage is a women's issue. Women make up two-thirds of minimum-wage workers nationwide. Congress needs to raise their wages and make sure they are not being redlined or sidelined by outdated policies or harassed and intimidated when seeking justice for pay discrimination.

Being a woman costs more, and women pay more for everything. Women pay more in medical costs than men—an estimated \$10,000 over a lifetime. Women are often responsible for child care. Women even get charged more for dry cleaning. We are charged more for our blouses than men's shirts, and we are tired of being taken to the cleaners. When we earn less, we are asked to pay more.

Women are almost half of the workforce and 40 percent of them are the sole breadwinners in their families. They are tired of being paid crumbs.

Women continue to make less. Women are still making only 77 cents for every \$1 a man makes. Women of color suffer even greater injustice. If you are African American, you earn 62 cents for every \$1 a man makes. If you are Hispanic, you earn 54 cents for every \$1 a man makes.

Everybody likes to say to us: Oh, you have come a long way. But I don't think we have come a long way. We have only gained 18 cents in 50 years.

By the time she retires, the average woman will lose more than \$431,000 over her lifetime because of the wage gap. That affects your Social Security and pension. It weakens your retirement security.

This is not about men versus women. It is about building a middle class. Wages have been flat for everyone. Men need a pay raise too. When they get it, we will stand shoulder to shoulder with them—because we all need a raise to raise our families.

The Fair Minimum Wage Act is about putting change in the lawbooks and change in family checkbooks. Women of America, it is time to suit up, square our shoulders, put on our lipstick, increase the minimum wage for everyone, and fight the fair pay revolution.

AMENDMENTS NOS. 2878, 2877, AND 2875
WITHDRAWN

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, amendments Nos. 2878, 2877, and 2875 are withdrawn.

VOTE ON MOTION TO WAIVE

Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to the motion to waive.

The yeas and nays have been ordered. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) would have voted "nay."

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. WARREN). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 60, nays 36, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 99 Leg.]

YEAS—60

Baldwin	Heinrich	Murray
Begich	Heitkamp	Nelson
Bennet	Heller	Portman
Blumenthal	Hirono	Pryor
Booker	Johnson (SD)	Reed
Boxer	Kaine	Reid
Brown	King	Rockefeller
Cantwell	Kirk	Sanders
Cardin	Klobuchar	Schatz
Carper	Landrieu	Schumer
Casey	Leahy	Shaheen
Collins	Levin	Stabenow
Coons	Manchin	Tester
Donnelly	Markey	Udall (CO)
Durbin	McCaskill	Udall (NM)
Feinstein	Menendez	Walsh
Franken	Merkley	Warner
Gillibrand	Mikulski	Warren
Hagan	Murkowski	Whitehouse
Harkin	Murphy	Wyden

NAYS—36

Alexander	Fischer	Moran
Ayotte	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hatch	Rubio
Burr	Hoeven	Scott
Chambliss	Inhofe	Sessions
Coats	Isakson	Shelby
Cochran	Johanns	Thune
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Crapo	Lee	Vitter
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker

NOT VOTING—4

Coburn	Cruz
Cornyn	McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 60, the nays are 36. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen and sworn having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

VOTE ON AMENDMENT NO. 2874

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the question is on agreeing to amendment No. 2874.

The amendment (No. 2874) was agreed to.

Mr. REID. For the knowledge of all Members, we are going to have one more vote today and the next vote will be Monday at 5:30 p.m.

I just want to tell everyone, sometimes people get upset at Senator MCCONNELL and me because we don't know what is going on. Well, I hate to admit this, but sometimes he and I don't know what is going on. It is hard to get, sometimes, where we are. So I appreciate that even though Senator MCCONNELL and I have a few little dustups on the floor in front of everybody, whenever we are in private we work well together to try to do the best things for this body.

To get to where we are today wasn't easy, and we should have a good week next week. I know there is a lot of angst on both sides with the things they want to get done, but everyone should be patient. We are trying to work through the process.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the clerk will report the motion to invoke cloture.

The bill clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, hereby move to bring to a close debate on H.R. 3979, an act to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirements contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Harry Reid, Jack Reed, Patrick J. Leahy, Thomas R. Carper, Elizabeth Warren, Tammy Baldwin, Edward J. Markey, Christopher A. Coons, Tom Harkin, Cory A. Booker, Tom Udall, Kirsten E. Gillibrand, Barbara Boxer, Angus S. King, Jr., Christopher Murphy, Al Franken, Bernard Sanders.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. By unanimous consent, the mandatory quorum call has been waived.

The question is, Is it the sense of the Senate that debate on H.R. 3979, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to ensure that emergency services volunteers are not taken into account as employees under the shared responsibility requirement contained in the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, shall be brought to a close?

The yeas and nays are mandatory under the rule.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. COBURN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN), the Senator from Texas (Mr. CRUZ), and the Senator from Arizona (Mr. MCCAIN).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Texas (Mr. CORNYN) would have voted "nay."

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The yeas and nays resulted—yeas 61, nays 35, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 100 Leg.]

YEAS—61

Ayotte	Heinrich	Nelson
Baldwin	Heitkamp	Portman
Begich	Heller	Pryor
Bennet	Hirono	Reed
Blumenthal	Johnson (SD)	Reid
Booker	Kaine	Rockefeller
Boxer	King	Sanders
Brown	Kirk	Schatz
Cantwell	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cardin	Landrieu	Shaheen
Carper	Leahy	Stabenow
Casey	Levin	Tester
Collins	Manchin	Udall (CO)
Coons	Markey	Udall (NM)
Donnelly	McCaskill	Walsh
Durbin	Menendez	Warner
Feinstein	Merkley	Warren
Franken	Mikulski	Whitehouse
Gillibrand	Murkowski	Wyden
Hagan	Murphy	
Harkin	Murray	

NAYS—35

Alexander	Flake	Paul
Barrasso	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hatch	Rubio
Burr	Hoeven	Scott
Chambliss	Inhofe	Sessions
Coats	Isakson	Shelby
Cochran	Johanns	Thune
Corker	Johnson (WI)	Toomey
Crapo	Lee	Vitter
Enzi	McConnell	Wicker
Fischer	Moran	

NOT VOTING—4

Coburn	Cruz
Cornyn	McCain

The PRESIDING OFFICER. On this vote the yeas are 61, the nays are 35. Three-fifths of the Senators duly chosen having voted in the affirmative, the motion is agreed to.

The Senator from Montana.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—H.R. 2259

Mr. WALSH. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to consideration of Calendar No. 314, H.R. 2259; that the bill be read a third time and passed and the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I want to inform the Chair that two of our colleagues have concerns about this legislation—Senators COBURN and CRUZ—and would like to address those concerns with the sponsors. So on their behalf, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Montana.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—S. 255

Mr. WALSH. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to Calendar No. 173, S. 255; that the committee-reported amendment be agreed to; the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed; and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. TOOMEY. Madam President, this is the same legislation, and so for the same reason, on behalf of Senators COBURN and CRUZ, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Objection is heard.

The Senator from Montana.

Mr. WALSH. Madam President, in the far northwestern corner of Montana is one of the most special places on Earth—the North Fork of the Flathead River. The North Fork is a spectacular gravel-bed river that starts in British Columbia and runs along the western half of Glacier National Park before arriving in Flathead Lake.

The North Fork is a world-class trout fishery, with bulltrout and cutthroat trout sharing the same winding waters that grizzly bears rely on for huckleberries. It is the most important wildlife corridor between the Great Plains and the Cascades, and Montanans have always enjoyed rafting, hiking, fishing, and hunting in it.

Today, about 2 million people visit Glacier National Park each year, bringing \$170 million into the local economy and supporting 2,750 jobs.

For 40 years, Montanans have fought to keep the North Fork pristine. My colleague Senator JON TESTER and I are committed to taking this across the finish line.

Four years ago, Montana and British Columbia reached a historic agreement to protect the river on both sides of the border. Two years ago Canada upheld its end of the bargain. Today, the U.S. Congress has the opportunity to do the same. The entire Montana congressional delegation is in bipartisan agreement that the North Fork deserves to be withdrawn permanently from future mineral development. Montanans of all stripes have endorsed this action, including the local chambers of commerce and energy companies such as ConocoPhillips.

In fact, the primary interest in more than 80 percent of existing Federal leases in the watershed have voluntarily been relinquished. Everyone recognizes how important it is to keep the North Fork pristine. It is just the right thing to do.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee passed the North Fork Watershed Protection Act with no opposition last June. The House passed the North Fork Watershed Protection Act by voice vote last month. This bill is our chance to leave a jewel in the crown of the continent in better shape than we found it.

I ask my colleagues to join me and all Montanans in that effort. We can send this bill to the President to sign today.

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, will the junior Senator from Montana yield for a question?

Mr. WALSH. I will.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The senior Senator from Montana.

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, when my colleague's motion was objected to, the good Senator from Pennsylvania, Senator TOOMEY, said he understood Senators COBURN and CRUZ wished to have further conversation. Has my colleague had a chance to visit with Senators COBURN and CRUZ already about this bill?

Mr. WALSH. Yes, I have.

Mr. TESTER. So that has already been done.

I want to thank my colleague Senator WALSH for attempting to bring up the North Fork Watershed Protection Act for a vote. I also want to echo his frustration that once again politics is trumping good policy.

The North Fork bill is a Montana-made bill. Folks back home who support this bill are from all political sides of the spectrum. It has wide bipartisan support. Members of both parties, as Senator WALSH pointed out, voted it out of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Yet today two Senators—whom I would challenge to find the North Fork on a map—have decided to hold this bill up.

Let me remind them what this bill does. It ensures access along the North Fork for hunters and anglers who contribute to Montana's \$6 billion outdoor economy. If you want to talk about economic development, this is an incredible driver.

The bill also honors a commitment to our neighbor to the north, Canada.

Three years ago British Columbia signed an agreement to retire oil and gas leases on their side of the border, expecting us to protect the region as well. This bill guarantees we hold up our end of the bargain, and it ensures we pass along our outdoor way of life.

I should also point out that Exxon and Conoco both have also given up their leases in this region. Why? Because this drainage feeds Flathead Lake, which is the largest freshwater body of water west of the Mississippi. It is an incredible ecosystem.

I think what has happened today is a loss not only for Montana, not only for America's great outdoors, but for this entire country.

This fight is not over. For far too long in this body we have had people who obstruct just because they can. It is time to start working together and doing what is right, whether we are talking about conservation issues, tax issues, unemployment issues, or whatever it might be. It is time to start moving the country forward because people are suffering out there.

I thank the Chair, and I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Montana.

Mr. WALSH. Madam President, I am so disappointed my colleagues on the other side of the aisle are blocking the desire of Montanans to protect the North Fork. This bill is a no-brainer. I invite my colleagues to visit Montana and see the North Fork for themselves. Their actions today show why Washington is broken. Despite years of bipartisan hard work, narrow interests can trump responsible leadership.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GREEN MOUNTAIN LOOKOUT HERITAGE PROTECTION ACT

Mrs. MURRAY. Madam President, I come to the floor this afternoon to request unanimous consent to pass a bill that is a very small step in what will be a very long recovery process for a community in my home State of Washington that was devastated by a landslide less than two weeks ago.

This is the Green Mountain Lookout bill, which will be passed shortly. It is not going to rebuild anybody's home—which needs to be done—or provide desperately needed human aid that we are supporting through our recent Federal disaster designation. What this small, little bill does is provide a glimmer of hope for the long-term recovery of this region, and in particularly of the community of Darrington.

For years now, along with Senator CANTWELL, I have fought to pass this

bill through procedural and political hurdles because I know what it means to Snohomish County and that region of my State. The Green Mountain Lookout is more than a hiking destination. It is part of the Pacific Northwest heritage. It is a cherished historical landmark. It is a place where parents have brought their kids for generations to appreciate the splendor of the great outdoors in the Northwest, and it is a place that has been a vital source of tourism-related income for the people who have been impacted by this deadly landslide that struck this region.

I was in Darrington this weekend and had an opportunity to sit down with the mayor and many of the town officials—a town of about 1200 people—and they told me tremendous stories about the families that have been lost, about people who had driven to the store on that Saturday morning and now only had what they wore when they left their homes a few hours earlier. I heard about the needs this community is going to have for a long time and the emotional impact.

After finishing our official meetings, the mayor took us aside and told me, Senator CANTWELL, and Congresswoman DELBENE that the one glimmer of hope he thought he could provide for this community was passage of this Green Mountain Lookout bill that we are going to pass in just a few moments.

So I want to extend truly heartfelt thanks to both Senator LANDRIEU and Senator MURKOWSKI, who have been incredibly understanding, and to all the Members of the Senate who have been helpful in going through the process of getting the bill to the floor today. They know what it means when communities large or small are impacted by a disaster of this size, and both of them know that the Federal Government needs to be there quickly to provide support.

Madam President, the people of Oso, Arlington, and Darrington have a very long road to recovery ahead, so I was very pleased when the President granted a major disaster declaration just last night which will be vital to meeting many of the immediate human needs that we are going to be facing.

It is important that these communities know we are in it for the long term as well. Even a small step like this one that supports the region's tourist economy and brings that little bit of hope is critical to showing them that all of us and the Federal Government will be there for them. So as they mourn their loved ones and work hard to recover and ultimately rebuild, I am proud that we will not forget them.

With that, Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 338, S. 404.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the bill by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 404) to preserve the Green Mountain Lookout in the Glacier Peak Wilderness

of the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment.

(Insert the part printed in *italic*.)

S. 404

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Green Mountain Lookout Heritage Protection Act”.

SEC. 2. CLARIFICATION OF LEGAL AUTHORITY OF GREEN MOUNTAIN LOOKOUT.

(a) LEGAL AUTHORITY OF LOOKOUT.—Section 4(b) of the Washington State Wilderness Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-339; 98 Stat. 300; 16 U.S.C. 1131 note) is amended by striking the period at the end and inserting the following: “, and except that with respect to the lands described in section 3(5), the designation of such lands as a wilderness area shall not preclude the operation and maintenance of Green Mountain Lookout.”

(b) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by this section shall take effect as if included in the enactment of the Washington State Wilderness Act of 1984.

SEC. 3. PRESERVATION OF GREEN MOUNTAIN LOOKOUT LOCATION.

The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, may not move Green Mountain Lookout from its current location on Green Mountain in the Mount Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest unless the Secretary determines that moving Green Mountain Lookout is necessary to preserve the Lookout or to ensure the safety of individuals on or around Green Mountain. If the Secretary makes such a determination, the Secretary shall move the Green Mountain Lookout to a location outside of the lands described in section 3(5) of the Washington State Wilderness Act of 1984 and designated as a wilderness area in section 4(b) of such Act.

SEC. 4. ALASKA NATIVE VETERAN ALLOTMENT.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPLICATION.—The term “application” means the Alaska Native Veteran Allotment application numbered AA-084021-B.

(2) FEDERAL LAND.—The term “Federal land” means the 80 acres of Federal land that is—

(A) described in the application; and
(B) depicted as Lot 2 in U.S. Survey No. 13957, Alaska, that was officially filed on October 9, 2009.

(3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(b) ISSUANCE OF PATENT.—Notwithstanding section 41 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1629g) and subject to subsection (c), the Secretary shall—

(1) approve the application; and
(2) issue a patent for the Federal land to the person that submitted the application.

(c) TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The patent issued under subsection (b) shall—

(A) only be for the surface rights to the Federal land; and

(B) be subject to the terms and conditions of any certificate issued under section 41 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1629g), including terms and conditions providing that—

(i) the patent is subject to valid existing rights, including any right of the United States to income derived, directly or indirectly, from a lease, license, permit, right-of-way, or easement on the Federal land; and

(ii) the United States shall reserve an interest in deposits of oil, gas, and coal on the Federal

land, including the right to explore, mine, and remove the minerals on portions of the Federal land that the Secretary determines to be prospectively valuable for development.

(2) ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may require any additional terms and conditions for the issuance of the patent under subsection (a) that the Secretary determines to be appropriate to protect the interests of the United States.

Mrs. MURRAY. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported amendment be agreed to, the bill, as amended, be read a third time and passed, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The committee-reported amendment was agreed to.

The bill (S. 404), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mrs. MURRAY. Thank you, Madam President.

I know the town of Darrington will thank you as well.

PROTECTING VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY RESPONDERS ACT OF 2014—Continued

Mrs. MURRAY. I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. SESSIONS. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. COONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RODRIGUEZ NOMINATION

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, the Judiciary Committee, of which I am a member, voted on the nomination of Leon Rodriguez to be Director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, also known as USCIS. This agency has been at the center of the collapse of immigration enforcement in America, and Mr. Rodriguez, if confirmed, will—it seems certain—continue to accelerate that collapse. I think it is an important issue for all of us to talk about. It is not so much about him personally, but it is what he is going to be asked to do.

This is about what has been happening at Homeland Security—and USCIS is an important part of that—and how it is impacting the rule of law in America and immigration enforcement in America—or nonenforcement. It is a very serious matter. What I am going to say today is based on my best judgment of how and why it is happening and why this Congress needs to speak up about it.

I have an article from the Washington Post, which is dated December 18, a few months ago. The article in the Washington Post is headlined “Federal

Workers’ Job Satisfaction Falls, with Homeland Security Depart. Ranking Lowest Again.”

It goes on to say:

Federal employees who deal with homeland security matters remain some of the government’s least-satisfied, as overall workforce morale hit its lowest point in a decade, according to a report that began ranking agencies on such issues in 2003.

It goes on to say:

The Department of Homeland Security, a perennial bottom-dweller in the “Best Places to Work in the Federal Government” rankings, marked its third consecutive year of decline and its second straight year of being last among the 19 largest agencies. This is not acceptable, and I raised that issue with Secretary Napolitano repeatedly at the hearings.

I will remind my colleagues that the officers association of another one of the three core immigration agencies—the Immigration and Customs Enforcement Service—unanimously voted no confidence in their then-Director John Norton mainly because he refused to allow them to comply with their duty under the law to enforce immigration laws in America. We had the Director of ICE and—you will learn—the Director of USCIS, and I suggest the Homeland Security Director, investing their time and effort in seeing that the laws of the United States were not enforced rather than being enforced.

This gentleman is not prepared to lead this job if he were to be supported in his activity, but, in fact, he was sent here because he will not rock the boat. He will be given this position to continue this policy of nonenforcement, even against the will of the officers who serve under him.

The last thing we should do is put someone in a critical law enforcement position, as these are, who doesn’t know anything about it, No. 1, and who is going to carry out President Obama’s policies, which is fundamentally not to enforce the law. I know there are people who think that is an exaggeration, but I am going to talk about it, and we are going to keep talking about it, and we are going to show what the facts are. This is a serious matter.

Mr. Rodriguez is not a trained administrator. He has never led a police department. He has never led and managed a real law enforcement agency. He has been a prosecutor of white-collar crime cases. He served for several years in the civil rights part of Homeland Security, but he has not managed the officers out there on the ground who are trying to deal with violent criminal aliens and get them deported and all the gimmicks that they use to get around that. He was a chief of staff to Mr. Perez, the head of the civil rights division in the Department of Justice. Mr. Perez is nearly a radical pro-amnesty nonenforcement leader himself. They were both members of CASA de Maryland, which is very much a pro-amnesty activist group that proposes ideas that are outside the mainstream.

I assume Majority Leader REID will bring this nomination up for a vote in

the Senate, and it will be an important moment. Will the Senators vote to defend the integrity of the immigration laws we passed or will they help install someone to one of the most important positions in government who will further erode and undermine those laws? This is the question we are dealing with. We need to be honest about it. I don't think there is any mystery here.

First, Mr. Rodriguez lacks the normal background and experience for a position such as this. He doesn't have it. I am not saying he is not a good civil rights lawyer or white-collar crime lawyer, but he doesn't have the leadership experience to lead an agency such as this. His only apparent encounter with immigration was his service on the board of CASA de Maryland, which encourages illegal immigrants to defy law enforcement. It has been a very active group.

Tellingly, Mr. Rodriguez refused to answer questions regarding whether he believes an illegal immigrant who is ordered deported or convicted of a felony criminal offense or convicted of multiple misdemeanors or convicted of a single sex-related offense or convicted of a single drunk driving offense or known to be a gang member should be eligible for legal status in America. That is a pretty fair question to ask a nominee to this important position because USCIS evaluates people as to whether they have the requisites to be given legal status and a pathway to citizenship in America.

Mr. Rodriguez would not even say whether someone who has been denied legal status should be deported. So they come in and ask for legal status, and it is turned down, and he was asked: Should that person get to stay in the country or should that person be deported? There is only one answer to that question. If you are not eligible to be in the country and you had your hearing and you have been denied legal status, there is only one answer, and that is you should be deported. These should not be difficult questions for someone who wants to head an agency that is charged with ensuring the integrity of our system.

The President has summarily suspended entire portions of immigration law, granting unilateral reprieve to people based on everything from family connection to age of illegal entry, and criminal record. He just issues an order.

The Los Angeles Times reported earlier this week on the collapse of interior enforcement. They reported that "immigrants living illegally in most of the continental U.S. are less likely to be deported today than before Obama came into office." Boy, that is an understatement. That is an absolute fact. It went on to state:

Expulsions of people who are settled and working in the United States have fallen steadily since his first year in office, and are down more than 40% since 2009.

It is really a lot more than 40 percent. They went on to quote the former

Acting Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, John Sandweg, who left a little over a month ago. He was a top official in the Obama administration. He said: "If you are a run-of-the-mill immigrant here illegally, your odds of getting deported are close to zero." This is a guy who held an important position in the Department of Homeland Security. His duty was to identify people who are here illegally.

In effect, the administration's policy is that unless you commit a felony or other serious crime, you are free to illegally work here, claim certain tax benefits, and obtain fraudulent documents so you can get a job. Apparently having a fraudulent document to get a job you are not lawfully entitled to get is not something that gets you deported in this administration. Not apparently, that is the policy if truth be known.

It is an open invitation to every would-be illegal immigrant to come to the United States unlawfully and to every visa holder who is here lawfully on a visa for a limited time to ignore the expiration date of their visa and remain unlawfully in the country. That is the law the President has set.

If the immigration laws are not enforceable by virtue of the plain fact that they are duly passed laws by the Congress of the United States, then there is no real immigration law. Anyone who wishes is free to come on visa, let the visa expire and never leave. If you can get past the border in some fashion unlawfully, they can stay and nobody is going to impact you.

Yet, on March 13, after meeting with representatives of various amnesty groups, the Homeland Security Secretary—the top man, Mr. Johnson—reaffirmed that he is working to fulfill the President's request to reduce enforcement even further. It is astonishing that the President would order a review of enforcement policies, not for the purpose of repairing enforcement flaws but to weaken it even more.

According to a March 14, 2014, Los Angeles Times article quoting administrative officials:

The changes under review would effectively stop most deportations of [illegal immigrants] with no criminal convictions other than violations.

So any fraudulent documents that are used to come here and violate immigration laws or get a job or get into the country unlawfully don't count. You can do this all day. Come on down. This means that even fugitive aliens, and those who have committed immigration felonies would now be exempt from enforcement. It would represent a total evisceration of immigration law, including those laws designed to protect the wages and jobs of working Americans.

I will say parenthetically—we just had a vote on unemployment insurance because we continue to have a very high unemployment rate. We extended the normal limit on unemployment

benefits to people who don't have a job, and now we are doing nothing to protect American workers from people who are illegally here and taking jobs they need for their families.

In addition to that, the Senate passed a comprehensive immigration bill that would double the number of guest workers—the people who come here just to work—at a time of high unemployment.

We have a bill that will be coming up soon, I suppose, to raise the minimum wage. Why? Because wages have not risen sufficiently. We are not happy about that. In fact, wages have been declining for over a decade. This is a serious trend.

Dr. Borjas at Harvard attributes a good deal of that to the large flow of immigration, particularly in lower income Americans who are being hammered by this large flow of lower skilled foreign workers. It is supply and demand.

Why are wages not going up, colleagues? Do you believe in the free market? They are not going up because we have more workers than we have jobs.

Mr. Sperling, the President's former top economic adviser, admitted a few weeks ago that there are three applicants for every job in America. The last thing we need to be doing is doubling the number of foreign workers brought into the country and not enforcing the law with regard to people who have entered illegally, isn't that correct? I mean, can't we agree on issues such as that?

In 2012—go back to this, the problems—and people need to know this. The mainstream media does not want to talk about it. They don't tend to report it, but it has been out there for months—years. It is the reality. This is what a 2012 inspector general report of the Department of Homeland Security—this is their own inspector general, who serves at the pleasure of the Homeland Security Secretary. They issued a report which found that senior officials at USCIS—that is the Citizenship and Immigration Services, where this individual will be the head—they found that senior officials at USCIS have been pressuring employees to rubberstamp applications for immigration benefits despite obvious signs of fraud.

Kenneth Palinkas, president of the National Citizenship and Immigration Services Council—the union representing 12,000 adjudicators, officers, and staff—issued a statement in May of 2013 that echoed the findings of the report. This is what Mr. Palinkas's group said:

USCIS adjudications officers are pressured to rubberstamp applications instead of conducting diligent case review and investigations. The culture at USCIS encourages all applications to be approved, discouraging proper investigation into red flags and discouraging denial of applications. USCIS has been turned into an approval machine.

This is not acceptable. What are we paying 18,000 officers to do? Don't the

American people expect that they are supposed to be reviewing applications, not rubberstamping them; identifying people who may be terrorists or criminals or have no likelihood of producing anything worthwhile in America, who are not going to be successful in America, and who may be otherwise unlawfully eligible to enter, while we turn people down who have the lawful right to enter and put them on a backlog? It doesn't make any sense.

According to Mr. Palinkas:

USCIS has created an almost insurmountable bureaucracy which often prevents USCIS adjudications officers from contacting and coordinating with ICE agents and officers in cases that should have their involvement.

Look, the ICE officers are kind of like the criminal investigators. They deal with people who are apprehended inside the country. They deal with people who have been arrested or in jail on one cause or another—assaults, drugs, violence, criminality. So USCIS is evaluating paperwork to see if somebody is qualified, and they have some red flag, and they would like to call the ICE officers to see if this is the same guy who committed an assault or an armed robbery a few years ago, and they are being discouraged from doing that. What is this? It is exactly the opposite of what we are paying them to do.

Mr. Palinkas continues:

USCIS officers are pressured to approve visa applications for individuals that ICE agents have determined should be placed into deportation proceedings.

So they are pressuring them to approve these individuals who have not been approved.

I see Senator WARREN is here, and I will wrap up. I didn't realize she had been approved to speak at this time, and I will wrap up briefly.

We need to put an end to this lawlessness, and the next Director of USCIS must ensure the integrity of our immigration system—it is just that simple—as his mission statement calls for him to do. They must be independent and able to stand up for the rule of law under what undoubtedly will be tremendous political pressure from an administration and pro-amnesty activist groups who seem to be dominating the agenda and who have little interest in seeing the great classical American rule of law enforced.

Mr. Rodriguez, unfortunately, I am convinced is not that person. He would not be the right person if he really had the support of his leadership. He just doesn't have the background. He has never managed a major agency with 18,000 employees or anything like it. He does not have any experience on the frontlines of what they do every day and how they do it. But it is even worse because—look, why didn't they choose somebody who is experienced in DHS? Why didn't they choose a police chief or a military officer, someone who knows how to lead and manage a big agency such as this one, somebody

with independence and integrity? Why? Because they don't want somebody with independence and integrity committed to the enforcement of law. They have already decided they are not enforcing the law, and they want somebody such as this Casa de Maryland protegee to go into that agency who is not going to enforce the law.

It is a serious statement I make, and I think it is fundamentally accurate. I am just buffaloed that this is the fact.

Mr. Jonathan Turley, a constitutional lawyer who has written about government issues and constitutional issues for quite a number of years—Professor Turley has written recently and participated in a discussion where he said that what the President is doing with regard to immigration is beyond any justifiable utilization of prosecutorial discretion, that it amounts to a nullification of law by the President, who takes an oath and is constitutionally required to see that the laws of this country are faithfully carried out.

This is a very serious matter. We need to talk about it. This nomination sort of provides us an opportunity to recognize what is happening, and the American people are going to need to speak up. We need to be able to change what is happening to restore the great American heritage of law.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor. The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Massachusetts.

MINIMUM WAGE

Ms. WARREN. Mr. President, it has taken us 4 months, but we are finally on the verge of passing a long-overdue emergency extension of unemployment benefits. So I come to the floor this afternoon to urge my colleagues to continue supporting America's working families by raising the minimum wage.

Over the past 50 years the value of the minimum wage has sharply declined. In 1968 the minimum wage was high enough to keep a working parent with a family of three out of poverty. In 1980 the minimum wage was at least high enough to keep a working parent with a family of two out of poverty. Today the minimum wage isn't even high enough to keep a fully employed mother and a baby out of poverty. This is fundamentally wrong. Anyone who works full time should not live in poverty.

For nearly half a century, as we came out of the Great Depression, we lived by the basic principle that we all do better when we work together and build opportunities for everyone. For nearly half a century, as our country got richer our workers got richer, and as our workers got richer our country got richer. As the pie got bigger, we all got a little bit more. That is how it was, and that is how we built America's great middle class.

But that is not how it works now for low-income workers. Dr. Arin Dube of the University of Massachusetts has explained that if the minimum wage had kept up with increases in produc-

tivity, it would be \$22 an hour today. But it didn't keep up. So today, while corporate profits soar, millions of hard-working moms and dads are left behind, working full time and still living in poverty.

Democrats aren't proposing to increase the minimum wage to \$22 an hour. Our proposal is much more modest—a raise to \$10.10 an hour. That is modest by comparison, but for at least 14 million children who depend on a parent whose wages would go up as a result of this legislation, this increase will make their lives a whole lot more secure.

This bill is about the lives of minimum-wage workers, but it is also about every taxpayer in America and about the corporate welfare taxpayers are forced to dole out when these companies pay poverty-level wages.

More than half of low-wage working families participate in government assistance programs for food, for health care, and for other expenses. A study by researchers at UC Berkeley and the University of Illinois show that we spend about \$240 billion a year providing benefits to working families through food stamps, Medicaid, and other antipoverty programs.

When big companies pay poverty-level wages and then count on the government to cover basic expenses for their employees, they get a boost from every American taxpayer who helps pick up the ticket for food stamps and Medicaid. Taxpayer dollars are being used to boost the profits of private companies that don't want to pay their employees enough to keep them out of poverty. That is corporate welfare, plain and simple.

I understand why some businesses might like to keep it that way, but American taxpayers have had enough of this corporate welfare. American workers have had enough of this corporate welfare. America has had enough of this corporate welfare.

This is an uphill fight. Those big corporations that pay poverty-level wages want to keep wages the way they are. And why not? It is more money for corporate dividends and CEO bonuses. So those companies hire armies of lobbyists and lawyers who lean on Washington politicians to keep things exactly the way they are. Minimum-wage workers don't have an army of lobbyists and lawyers, and American taxpayers don't either. But Congress doesn't work for those big companies. We work for the workers and the taxpayers and the voters who sent us here.

It is time to call out this corporate welfare for what it is, and it is time to fight back. It has been 7 years since Congress last increased the minimum wage. Senator Ted Kennedy led that fight, and I am proud to carry that fight forward today. It is time to honor work again, time to honor people who get up every day and bust their tails to try to build a life for themselves and their children. It is time to increase the minimum wage.

Thank you, Mr. President. I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I be allowed to speak and that Senators MURKOWSKI, BEGICH, and WICKER be allowed to join me in a colloquy as they come to the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, thank you very much.

PIRATE FISHING

Mr. President, we are coming to the floor today because the four of us serve as the cochairs of the Senate Oceans Caucus. I know the Presiding Officer from Delaware has a keen interest in oceans issues as well, and we appreciate his support for the caucus.

We have worked very hard in this caucus to find bipartisan common ground on issues that relate to the seas and to our oceans, and one of the areas we have worked on is the area that is described in the jargon as IUU fishing, which means illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. The better word for it, the clearer word for it, the more accurate word for it is pirate fishing.

These are fishermen around the world who go to sea and they fish above legal limits, they fish out of season, they fish for catches they are not allowed to catch, they fish in waters they are not allowed to fish in, and then they come to shore and market their illicit product. When they do that, they hurt legitimate fishermen and they hurt American fishermen in two ways. First of all, fish migrate around the globe. If they are knocked down, damaged, and caught illegally in other areas, then the American fishery for that same species is hurt. The second is that depresses the global price for fish. These people can flood the market with illegal fish. That drops the price through the law of supply and demand, and now our American fishermen—who are fishing lawfully, who are abiding by the catch limits, who are fishing in the right seasons and places—suffer a disadvantage in the pricing when their fish get to market.

So this is an important issue for our States, and it is not for nothing that we are all coastal State Senators who are here to express our support for action on these treaties.

In the United States, commercial fish landings are over \$5 billion in revenue a year. Recreational anglers spend more than \$25 billion a year. So this is big business, and pirate fishing is a big hit to our big business. Pirate fishing losses have been estimated at between \$10 billion and \$24 billion every year.

When you consider that our whole recreational fishing industry is only roughly \$26 billion—and this is a \$24 billion raid, basically, on the international fisheries—it is important that we can do this.

So there is a package of treaties that has come out of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. There are four of them. Three of them are traditional fishing treaties covering the South Pacific, the North Pacific, and the Northwest Atlantic fisheries. You can only imagine what the North Pacific fishery means for Alaskan fishermen and what the Northwest Atlantic fishery means for our northeastern fishermen. It is very important that we get these treaties cleared through the Senate.

I am delighted that Chairman MENENDEZ and his ranking member Senator CORKER have passed these bills through the Foreign Relations Committee with very strong bipartisan support. I think we have a really good chance to get something done in a bipartisan fashion that is good for our industry and also the right thing to do.

It is simply unfair when international pirate fishers are able to knock down the fisheries market internationally and take away product that we would otherwise catch.

I see the senior Senator from Alaska has joined me on the floor. I just mentioned the North Pacific treaty, which I know has specific relevance to her State.

We are in a parliamentary position where we have unanimous consent to engage in a colloquy—Senator MURKOWSKI and I and Senator WICKER and Senator BEGICH as they arrive. So I now yield the floor to Senator MURKOWSKI. Let me say how much I appreciate her leadership. She has been the cochair of the Oceans Caucus. It was significantly her initiative that we should focus on pirate fishing, and I applaud all the work she has done, together with Senator WICKER, who has now joined us.

I yield to the Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I thank my friend and my colleague from Rhode Island, who also is my cochair on the Senate Oceans Caucus. As he has noted, this is an issue of IUU fishing—illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing—and, really, that is too polite a term for it. It is really piracy—piracy of our fisheries.

Senator WHITEHOUSE has been very engaged in working on so many of these key issues. I think this is quite important what we are discussing today—the positive step forward, not only for fishermen in my State but for fishermen around the Nation.

I would like to thank those who have been involved in this effort in addition to Senator WHITEHOUSE—Senator WICKER, as well as Senator BEGICH, for their efforts to help advance these treaties. I would also like to recognize Senator MENENDEZ and Senator CORKER for their support through the Foreign Relations Committee process.

It should come as no surprise to any of my colleagues here in terms of Alaska's role with our fisheries. Alaska leads all States in terms of both volume and value of commercial fisheries, with approximately 1.84 million metric tons, worth \$1.3 billion. The seafood coming out of Alaska accounts for over 52 percent of our Nation's commercial seafood harvest. Our commercial, sport, and subsistence fisheries are really at the heart of coastal Alaska. They are the source of economic livelihood for more than 80,000 Alaskans who are directly or indirectly employed in the industry. I count my family as part of Alaska's fishing families who support very well managed, sustainable fisheries.

But what we have seen from these acts of piracy—this illegal fishing—let's take, for instance, the crab fisheries, is very serious. Illegally harvested Russian king crab has been a real problem for us in Alaska since the early 1990s. In 2011 NOAA law enforcement seized 112 metric tons of illegally harvested Russian king crab that was being shipped to U.S. markets through the Port of Seattle. So what happens here is you have the Russians, who are taking too many of the king crab, illegally harvesting them and then effectively dumping them on the U.S. markets. Well, what do you think that does, then, to the price of the crab we are catching here lawfully in the United States? It is depressing the price of crab. Now, I know this. I mentioned that my family is in the fishing business. My cousin is involved in the crab industry. They have seen the prices of crab go down between 20 and 25 percent because of this illegal harvesting by the Russians.

This is not just a small problem. This is not something that is just happening right now. This has been happening for decades now, and it needs to be stopped. I do want to take a moment to express my appreciation for the amazing work our U.S. Coast Guard does, as well as the other agencies, NOAA and the State Department, their combined efforts they are making to combat pirate fishing. It is greatly appreciated by me and my constituents.

We have four treaties in front of us that will help to level this playing field and ensure that our coastal fishing communities will face less unfair competition from pirate fishing vessels that simply have not been held to the high fisheries management standards we have here in the United States.

Two of the treaties we are looking at are particularly important for my State. One is the Port State Measures Agreement. This sets global standards to combat IUU fishing, and it helps to protect our U.S. fishermen by keeping the foreign, illegally caught fish from entering the global stream of commerce. It is hugely important for us.

The other one I would like to highlight is the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North

Pacific Ocean. This will ensure that the North Pacific Fisheries Commission is established and also helps to ensure that there is a fisheries management regime in place to deter this IUU fishing within the region adjacent to Alaska. So it is critically important when it comes to our fisheries and the sustainability of our fisheries and how we manage our fisheries.

We are trying to play by the rules. We expect others to be doing the same.

So, again, I appreciate the work so many have done to help advance these treaties that are before us.

I see my colleague from Mississippi on the floor, and I would like to hear again from him in terms of support for these treaties.

With that, I yield to my friend from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. I thank my colleague.

Mr. President, I do not know if I need to seek recognition to be in a colloquy, but I do appreciate the remarks of the Senator from Rhode Island and the Senator from Alaska.

I rise this afternoon to join them in wholehearted support of these four important measures. They are an important step in combating—the term we use, as the Senator from Alaska said—is illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, IUU fishing, but I will also join my colleagues in saying that it is nothing short of pirate fishing.

It has broad economic, social, and ecological consequences. I am glad to join in support of these four measures. They have been hotlined. For those within the sound of our voices today that do not understand that, it is an expedited way to move things on a unanimous basis. I have every reason to believe that it will only be a matter of time before we have these hotline requests cleared on both sides of the aisle.

Alaska and Rhode Island have their interests in this. I can assure you that Mississippi does too. Mississippi is home to many hard-working fishing communities. They depend on the oceans for their livelihoods. We are the sixth largest seafood-producing State in the country. Many people might not realize that. We are second in the Gulf of Mexico to the State of Louisiana.

Pirate fishing hurts our fishermen. Our fishermen abide by the law. Pirate fishing puts them at a competitive disadvantage, as the Senator said. These fishermen who are small business owners, for the most part, should not be penalized for playing by the rules. International cooperation and standards are needed to protect local commerce and the environment. That is what the Agreement on Port State Measures would do.

Under the agreement, vessels carrying illegally harvested fish would not be allowed to enter our ports and thereby dilute the market with fraudulent product. In this way, the agreement would protect U.S. fishermen, seafood buyers, and consumers, while also supporting marine habitat, coastal economies, and coastal communities.

Estimates show that pirate fishing costs as much as \$23 billion per year globally and poses a serious threat to the sustainability of marine habitat. In parts of the world it accounts for up to 40 percent of the wild marine fish caught.

Other treaties under consideration address high seas fisheries resources. As the Senator from Alaska said, one in the North Pacific, yet another in the South Pacific, as well as amendments to the 1978 Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization Convention. These amendments simply update the conventions with standards similar to those that we in the United States use for our domestic waters.

These treaties can serve as powerful tools for showing that the United States is committed to enforcing fisheries laws and encouraging other countries to follow suit. Like other fisheries treaties that the Senate has ratified, they would protect America's interests, and they would protect American workers.

Our commercial and recreational fishing industries are responsible for 1.7 million American jobs and countless more at docks and facilities for processing and distribution. In summary, these four measures are good for the economy, they are good for the seafood industry, they are good for consumers, they are good for small business people, and they are good for our commercial fishermen.

It is an opportunity for us to strike a blow for bipartisanship and internationalism. I am glad to see the widespread support. I look forward to the measures being cleared on both sides of the aisle. I see my other distinguished colleague from Alaska here.

I yield the floor.

Mr. BEGICH. Mr. President, what you will find with these issues is that they are bipartisan. Fish know no boundaries of political persuasion. They look at what is important to them. We like to catch them and eat them. So it does not matter where they come from, whether from the seas of Alaska or from the gulf. So I thank the Senator for the opportunity to say a few words.

To Senator WHITEHOUSE, my thanks for organizing and allowing this opportunity. I will tell you, we do not mean to outnumber you, having two Alaskans here. We are so dedicated to this issue. I can tell you having this opportunity to have these four treaties ratified is incredibly important for us.

I know lots of times we talk about illegal, unreported, unregulated fishing. I like to simply call it pirate fishing. These are people who steal our fish out of our waters and then try to sell them back to us. Clearly it is what it is: stealing our stock and packing our fisheries and passing, as was just mentioned, the cost to our markets of \$23 billion a year nationwide—worldwide—because of these pirate fishermen and fishermen.

Alaskan crab fishermen, for example—for people who like to watch a re-

ality show, “The Deadliest Catch” is one of those. “The Deadliest Catch” guys tell me that there is over a half a billion dollars in lost crab because of illegal imports that are coming in. They may be stolen or labeled incorrectly.

The human impact is even more appalling, when you think about it. The working conditions on those boats are deplorable. They do not call them “rust buckets” for nothing. They are. They are dangerous. They are unsafe. There is forced labor, human trafficking, slavery. You name the list; it is everything you can imagine in these ships.

Again, you can call it what you want, but at the end of the day, what is happening is pirate fishing. They are stealing the fish. Again, illegal fishing is a stateless criminal enterprise. There are no flags. They steal fish with impunity. They victimize their workers. We need to fight back. These treaties help do it.

The Coast Guard—we love our coasties. It does not matter if they are in Alaska or around the country. They do an incredible job. They track down these criminals on the high seas and chase them down. You can see in this picture where they have caught one of the ships—our Coast Guard cutters in the North Pacific a few years back.

There is no question when they catch these ships what should happen to them, from my perspective. I am a little more radical on this. I know we will have these treaties, which are important. But you know, in my view, if they catch a ship like this, they should take the crew off, take the hazardous waste off, and sink it to the bottom of the ocean. Then we are done. The people will get a clear message.

I know some lawyers object to my idea. I recognize that. But let me tell you, we had some ships—this one, for example. As you can see, it is not only a rust bucket; you can see the rust bleeding off of it. This is one of these ships that was washed into our waters from the tsunami in Japan. You can see a well-placed artillery shell hit it in the middle because they decided to sink it.

So after the Coast Guard's lawyers thought it was not a good idea, we had a piece of equipment that they then went ahead and sunk. I will tell you, you do this kind of activity, and I guarantee you the pirates of this country who are trying to steal our fish will get a clear and simple message.

But it is important to go after these pirates. The Coast Guard—in this case it was an old rust bucket they sunk to the bottom. I have taken to the floor many times to say they need better tools, more cutters, more patrol aircraft to do their job and increase their capacity in going after these pirates—not only pirates on fishing, but also smuggling drugs and all the other work that these illegal ships are doing that they need to go after. We need to have tougher laws. That is what these treaties do. They strengthen the laws. They

are bipartisan. The Port State Measures Agreement tightens rules on seafood imports, provides for better inspection, and lists the pirate boats so we know who to keep out of our waters.

Others deal with protecting high seamounts and other needed provisions specific to the North Pacific, the South Pacific, and the Atlantic. They have been in years of negotiations. I applaud our teams at the State Department and NOAA and the many Senators who have engaged in this issue to solve this problem, to create more tools for us to enforce.

We need to do our part. We need to support these treaties. Again, it is a bipartisan effort. We need to support these treaties because it will support our fishermen, support our economies throughout the ocean States and the Gulf States and throughout the States that impact with fisheries. We also need to do it because of the rule of law and protecting and respecting the rule of law and human dignity that we insist on.

When we think of the impact of these individuals who are trapped on these boats—literally, the human trafficking, slavery, and forced work that these guys are taken to on these pirate ships is appalling. We should be appalled just by that fact alone, besides the billions they steal from the waters and try to resell from their harvest in our oceans illegally.

So let me just sum up by saying again that I know my idea of sinking a pirate ship may be a little radical. But the Coast Guard did it on one ship. My view is, why not more? But at least we will have some treaties, maybe with this work on the floor tonight. Again, to Senator WHITEHOUSE, I thank him for organizing all of us who care so deeply about the fishing industry and these treaties that will make a difference. When you put more tools in the toolbox, it will have an impact.

You can rest assured I will do everything I can to gather the support necessary to make sure these treaties pass. I will stop at this point. I appreciate the effort. Thank you for allowing me to have visual aids. Sometimes words are great, but visual aids make impact. Hopefully, people can see. Hopefully, these pirates will see we are serious and this is not some movie that Johnny Depp is in either. We are going after those pirate ships.

Thank you for the opportunity to say a few words.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I thank the Senator from Mississippi and the two Senators from Alaska for participating in this bipartisan effort. Let me conclude by reading something that Chris Lischewski, who is the CEO and President of Bumble Bee Foods, wrote to me:

Everybody loves a tuna fish sandwich. And Bumble Bee has been in that industry for a long time. They are a proud American company. But tuna travel great distances. They are a fish, that if foreign pirates go after them and fish them illegally, and fish them

unsustainably and knock that population down, that comes home to roost for good old Bumble Bee Foods.

Here is what the CEO of that company said:

IUU fishing is a multi-billion dollar industry that undermines our global conservation and sustainability efforts.

By that he means his company.

Illegal fishing penalizes legitimate fishermen and processors and it must be stopped. While the United States has done a good job at developing laws to detect and deter IUU fishing, other nations have not. We strongly support the agreement on Port State Measures to prevent, deter and eliminate the illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, because it creates an obligation for other nations to take action against IUU fishing.

I yield the floor. If any of my colleague wish to speak, let me just say that they do so with my gratitude for this bipartisan moment in the Senate and in support of the jobs that the fishing industry provides for our constituents.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I think we are waiting here for a couple of minutes. I will use a couple of minutes to speak again to those who come to our assistance when it comes to the enforcement of our fisheries laws—the men and women of our Coast Guard, NOAA, and our other enforcement agencies.

Senator BEGICH has somewhat dramatically shown some of the scenes. This is not easy stuff out there. When you have somebody who we have reason to believe has been operating illegally in violation of our agreed fisheries laws, more likely than not they are not just going to stand by and let you board and take a peek. They are going to take chase.

As we are hearing, as we are trying to find some evidence of the missing Malaysian jetliner, the oceans out there are pretty darn big. Usually, the conditions are not ones in which you would want to go out on a pleasure cruise.

Our men and women who are engaged in those enforcement efforts are truly heroes to us in terms of the efforts that they make, the energy that they expend, and the risk that they place themselves at.

So day after day, as they cover our waters, as they work to ensure that there is an effective management of our fisheries, their efforts to enforce these laws, their efforts to provide for a level of protection and safety, their efforts to bring the pirates to justice are truly to be applauded.

I thank the Senator for the opportunity to make that brief statement. I see my friend and colleague is at the ready, hopefully to announce that we will be able to move to passage of these significant treaties.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. It appears that we will shortly be able to do that. This is a happy coincidence in which four Senators in bipartisan fashion have come to the floor to support action on four treaties that will help protect our fishing industry, and it turns out that

at this moment the treaties have been cleared for ratification on both sides of the aisle. In a moment I will be able to take us through those parliamentary steps, but on behalf of all four of us, I should express my appreciation to Chairman MENENDEZ and to his ranking member Senator CORKER for the leadership they have shown in getting these treaties through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I know it was in a strongly bipartisan fashion. I think it was in a unanimously bipartisan fashion.

The Presiding Officer is a member of that distinguished committee, and I want to express my appreciation to the Presiding Officer, Senator COONS of Delaware.

It is good to be able to do these kinds of things in a bipartisan fashion. It reminds me a little bit of our friend Senator ENZI's 80/20 rule: We get 80 percent done in the Senate without incident, but then, of course, nobody notices. The other 20 percent we fight over, and the fight gets 80 percent of the attention.

So it is a happy moment when we can do something good for our industry, good for our fisheries, do it in a bipartisan fashion, and do it smoothly.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

AGREEMENT ON PORT STATE MEASURES TO PREVENT, DETER, AND ELIMINATE ILLEGAL, UNREPORTED, AND UNREGULATED FISHING

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE HIGH SEAS FISHERIES RESOURCES IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC OCEAN

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF HIGH SEAS FISHERIES RESOURCES IN THE NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN

AMENDMENT TO THE CONVENTION ON FUTURE MULTILATERAL COOPERATION IN THE NORTHWEST ATLANTIC FISHERIES

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session to consider Calendar Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4, treaty document Nos. 112-4, 113-1, 113-2, 113-3, en bloc; that the treaties be considered as having advanced through the various parliamentary stages up to and including the presentation of the resolutions of ratification; that any committee declarations be agreed to as applicable; that any statements be printed in the RECORD as if read; further, that when the votes on the resolutions of ratification are taken, they be in the order reported, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon

the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The treaties will be stated.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

Treaty document No. 112-4, a resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing;

Treaty document No. 113-1, a resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of the High Seas Fisheries Resources in the South Pacific Ocean;

Treaty document No. 113-2, a resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean; and

Treaty document No. 113-3, a resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Amendment to the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I ask for a division vote on each of the resolutions of ratification.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

A division vote has been requested.

On treaty document No. 112-4, Senators in favor of the resolution of ratification will rise and stand until counted.

Those opposed will rise and stand until counted.

On a division vote, two-thirds of the Senators present having voted in the affirmative, the resolution of ratification is agreed to.

The resolution of ratification is as follows:

Resolved, (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein),

Section 1. Senate Advice and Consent Subject to a Declaration.

The Senate advises and consents to the ratification of the Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter, and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated Fishing, done at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in Rome, Italy, November 22, 2009, and signed by the United States November 22, 2009 (the Agreement') (Treaty Doc. 112-4), subject to 12 the declaration of section 2.

Sec. 2. Declaration.

The advice and consent of the Senate under section is subject to the following declaration: The Agreement is non self-executing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. A division vote has been requested.

On treaty document No. 113-1, Senators in favor of the resolution of ratification will rise and stand until counted.

Those opposed will rise and stand until counted.

On a division vote, two-thirds of the Senators present having voted in the affirmative, the resolution of ratification is agreed to.

The resolution of ratification is as follows:

Resolved, (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein),

Section 1. Senate Advice and Consent Subject to a Declaration.

The Senate advises and consents to the ratification of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean, done at Auckland, New Zealand, November 14, 2009, and signed by the United States January 31, 2011 (the "Convention") (Treaty Doc. 113-1), subject to the declaration of section 2.

Sec. 2. Declaration.

The advice and consent of the Senate under section is subject to the following declaration: The Convention is not self-executing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. A division vote has been requested.

On treaty document No. 113-2, Senators in favor of the resolution of ratification will rise and stand until counted.

Those opposed will rise and stand until counted.

On a division vote, two-thirds of the Senators present having voted in the affirmative, the resolution of ratification is agreed to.

The resolution of ratification is as follows:

Resolved, (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein),

Section 1. Senate Advice and Consent Subject to a Declaration.

The Senate advises and consents to the ratification of the Convention on the Conservation and Management of High Seas Fisheries Resources in the North Pacific Ocean, done at Tokyo February 24, 2012, and signed by the United States May 2, 2012 (the "Convention") (Treaty Doc. 113-2), subject to the declaration of section 2.

Sec. 2. Declaration.

The advice and consent of the Senate under section is subject to the following declaration: The Convention is not self-executing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. A division vote has been requested.

On treaty document No. 113-3, Senators in favor of the resolution of ratification will rise and stand until counted.

Those opposed will rise and stand until counted.

On a division vote, two-thirds of the Senators present having voted in the affirmative, the resolution of ratification is agreed to.

The resolution of ratification is as follows:

Resolved, (two-thirds of the Senators present concurring therein),

Section 1. Senate Advice and Consent Subject to a Declaration.

The Senate advises and consents to the ratification of the Amendment to the Convention on Future Multilateral Cooperation in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries, adopted at the Twenty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the North Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) (the 10 "Amendment") in Lisbon, Portugal, September 28, 2007 (Treaty Doc. 113-3), subject to the declaration of section 2.

Sec. 2. Declaration.

The advice and consent of the Senate under section 1 is subject to the following declaration: The Amendment is not self-executing.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I thank the Presiding Officer.

If there is no further business regarding these treaties, I yield the floor.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Kansas.

Mr. MORAN. I ask unanimous consent to address the Senate as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

TRIBUTE TO ALVIN BRENSING

Mr. MORAN. The story of Kansas is one that involves many people, many jobs, much ado about caring for others. Our State is a State of manufacturing workers, factory workers, teachers, farmers, and people who work hard every day to make a difference in their community and to make a difference in our State and Nation. Today I wish to pay tribute to one of those unsung heroes. In this case, it is a businessman, a volunteer, a husband, and a father who lived a full life before passing away in December of last year.

Alvin Brensing was born and raised on a farm outside of Hudson, a rural Central Kansas town with a population of 125. After high school, Brensing graduated with honors from Salt City Business College in Hutchison and in May 1937, at the age of 21, started working as a bookkeeper at the Stafford County Flour Mills.

As German immigrants, the Krug family realized that their American dream was going to be accomplished by establishing the flour mill more than a century ago. Alvin worked under William Krug and then Leonard Brim to help grow the company before being named its president in 1986. Under his leadership, Stafford County Flour Mills doubled its capacity and grew 2½ times its size. It was one of the last independent flour mills remaining in the United States, and the mill produces Hudson Cream Flour. Many of my colleagues and many Americans will have seen the bag of flour with the great symbol and emblem—Hudson Cream Flour. Hudson Cream Flour has a reputation around the Nation as a top-notch baking flour for its consistency and texture. It also serves as a tradition for this West Virginia family who wrote the company saying:

After using Hudson Cream Flour for all the years I have cooked . . . and can remember even my grandmother and mother using nothing else . . . I read for the first time the "absolute satisfaction guarantee" and really had a good laugh! I thought, if those people in Kansas only knew the absolute satisfaction my family has enjoyed from their product. The things we pass down in our family are good morals, good cooking, and Hudson Cream flour!

After Alvin's wife died in 1993, he came to miss the smell of fresh bread and soon began experimenting with ingredients. Alvin came up with three

recipes, including “Al’s Cinnamon Raisin Bread,” which is included on the back of every Hudson Cream Flour bag.

Alvin always put farmers and customers first. Current Stafford County Flour Mills president Reuel Foote reflected that Alvin often said, “Our word is our bond—if you agree to do something, you do it.”

While Alvin dedicated most of his life to ensuring the success and future of the mill, he was also a tireless volunteer in the Hudson community. Brensing took it upon himself to maintain Hudson’s Trinity Cemetery, where his parents and his wife Zelda are buried. In fact, he upgraded a shed on the property into a building where loved ones can now comfortably look up the location of their loved ones’ graves.

Alvin was also known as the local weatherman, collecting data for the National Weather Service from a local grain elevator. His daughters remember their dad turning the furnace on each Sunday morning to heat up the Trinity Community Church.

His legacy of leadership and volunteerism is what will live on as the Stafford County Flour Mills continue to support the community and educate youth, whether through the county 4-H Program or through the dozens of mill tours each year. The mill also continues Alvin’s tradition of giving each schoolkid a 5-pound bag of flour after each tour to encourage them to experiment with recipes and baking.

Alvin taught through his actions that satisfaction in life comes from what you do for others rather than what you do for yourself. This is the legacy I want to pay tribute to today, and this is the legacy he lived and leaves behind for the next generation.

We want those who follow him and us to know they have their chance to return home, put down their roots, and raise their own families in places such as Hudson, KS. Our Nation faces so many challenges today, but we must remain committed to doing what it takes so that tomorrow and every day thereafter our children and grandchildren have the opportunity to enjoy that special way of life in places like Kansas and to pursue their own American dream.

I ask my colleagues to join me in paying tribute and remembering the life of a great Kansan, Alvin Brensing.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted

to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

DELTA XI CENTENNIAL

• Mr. HELLER. Mr. President, I wish to honor my brothers of Sigma Nu Fraternity, especially the Delta Xi Chapter at the University of Nevada, which is celebrating 100 years of leadership, service, and brotherhood this year.

Since its founding in 1869 at the Virginia Military Institute, Sigma Nu has installed over 279 chapters and initiated more than one-quarter of a million members, including myself, an initiate and alumni of the Epsilon Omicron Chapter at the University of Southern California. It is an honor to know our fraternity’s mission—to develop ethical leaders inspired by the principles of love, honor, and truth—has prevailed for nearly a century.

The Delta Xi Chapter of our fraternal network is a standout among chapters in the Nation. Established by the Nevada Club at the turn of the 20th century, the brothers of Delta Xi have since initiated well over 1,900 members and awarded more than 100 deserving scholarships.

Their members not only prioritize their academic involvement within the University of Nevada system, but also give back to their local community through service. Their achievements and contributions to the community will only continue to grow as Sigma Nu is dedicated to fostering the personal growth of each man’s mind, heart, and character. Through its dedication to leadership and philanthropic commitments, our fraternity has sustained a nationally renowned reputation.

As Delta Xi celebrates its centennial year, its members have much to be proud of and look forward to for many years to come. I ask my colleagues to join me in congratulating the Delta Xi Chapter of Sigma Nu. •

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Pate, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

REPORT RELATIVE TO THE ISSUANCE OF AN EXECUTIVE ORDER DECLARING A NATIONAL EMERGENCY WITH RESPECT TO THE UNUSUAL AND EXTRAORDINARY THREAT TO THE NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES POSED BY THE SITUATION IN AND IN RELATION TO SOUTH SUDAN—PM 38

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with an accompanying report; which was referred to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs:

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) (IEEPA), I hereby report that I have issued an Executive Order (the “order”) declaring a national emergency with respect to the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States posed by the situation in and in relation to South Sudan.

The order does not target the country of South Sudan, but rather is aimed at persons who threaten the peace, stability, or security of South Sudan; commit human rights abuses against persons in South Sudan; or undermine democratic processes or institutions in South Sudan. The order provides authority for blocking the property and interests in property of any person determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State:

To be responsible for or complicit in, or to have engaged in, directly or indirectly, any of the following in or in relation to South Sudan:

actions or policies that threaten the peace, security, or stability of South Sudan;

actions or policies that threaten transitional agreements or undermine democratic processes or institutions in South Sudan;

actions or policies that have the purpose or effect of expanding or extending the conflict in South Sudan or obstructing reconciliation or peace talks or processes;

the commission of human rights abuses against persons in South Sudan;

the targeting of women, children, or any civilians through the commission of acts of violence (including killing, maiming, torture, or rape or other sexual violence), abduction, forced displacement, or attacks on schools, hospitals, religious sites, or locations where civilians are seeking refuge, or through conduct that would constitute a serious abuse or violation of human rights or a violation of international humanitarian law;

the use or recruitment of children by armed groups or armed forces in the context of the conflict in South Sudan;

the obstruction of the activities of international peacekeeping, diplomatic, or humanitarian missions in

South Sudan, or of the delivery or distribution of, or access to, humanitarian assistance; or

attacks against United Nations missions, international security presences, or other peacekeeping operations;

To be a leader of (i) an entity, including any government, rebel militia, or other group, that has, or whose members have, engaged in any of the activities described above or (ii) an entity whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order;

To have materially assisted, sponsored, or provided financial, material, logistical, or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, any activity described above or any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order; or

To be owned or controlled by, or to have acted or purported to act for or on behalf of, directly or indirectly, any person whose property and interests in property are blocked pursuant to the order.

I have delegated to the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, the authority to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of the order. All agencies of the United States Government are directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of the order.

I am enclosing a copy of the Executive Order I have issued.

BARACK OBAMA,
THE WHITE HOUSE, April 3, 2014.

ENROLLED BILL PRESENTED

The Secretary of the Senate reported that on today, April 3, 2014, she had presented to the President of the United States the following enrolled bill:

S. 2183. An act United States international programming to Ukraine and neighboring regions.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-5204. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting, pursuant to law, the annual report of the National Security Education Program for fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5205. A communication from the Acting Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel and Readiness), transmitting a report entitled "Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) 2013 Annual Report to Congress"; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5206. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule en-

titled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Clauses with Alternates-Research and Development Contracting" ((RIN0750-AH10) (DFARS Case 2013-D026)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 26, 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5207. A communication from the Director of Defense Procurement and Acquisition Policy, Department of Defense, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Defense Federal Acquisition Regulation Supplement: Clauses with Alternates-Quality Assurance" ((RIN0750-AH95) (DFARS Case 2013-D004)) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on March 26, 2014; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-5208. A communication from the Assistant to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Application of the Revised Capital Framework to the Capital Plan and Stress Test Rules" (RIN7100-AE-01 and RIN7100-AE-02) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 1, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5209. A communication from the Assistant Director for Regulatory Affairs, Office of Foreign Assets Control, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Iranian Transactions and Sanctions Regulations" (31 CFR Part 560) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5210. A communication from the Director, Office of Financial Research, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office's annual report on recruitment and retention, training and workforce development, and workforce flexibilities; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5211. A communication from the Executive Director of the Office of Minority and Women Inclusion, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office's fiscal year 2013 Annual Report to Congress; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5212. A communication from the Regulatory Specialist of the Legislative and Regulatory Activities Division, Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Technical Amendments: Removal of Rules Transferred to the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau; OCC Address Change" (RIN1557-AD76) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

EC-5213. A communication from the Assistant General Counsel for Legislation, Regulation and Energy Efficiency, Department of Energy, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Energy Conservation Program: Energy Conservation Standards for Commercial Refrigeration Equipment" (RIN1904-AC19) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 1, 2014; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-5214. A communication from the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "The Chesapeake Bay Program 2013"; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-5215. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Virtual Currency" (Notice 2014-21) received in the Office of the

President of the Senate on April 1, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5216. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Application of One-Per-Year Limit on IRA Rollovers" (Announcement 2014-15) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 1, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5217. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Modification of Revenue Procedure 2013-22" (Rev. Proc. 2014-28) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 1, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5218. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Guidance on Section 1.1502-75(b)" (Rev. Proc. 2014-24) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 1, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5219. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Applicable Federal Rates—April 2014" (Rev. Rul. 2014-12) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 1, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5220. A communication from the Chief of the Publications and Regulations Branch, Internal Revenue Service, Department of the Treasury, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Announcement and Report Concerning Advance Pricing Agreements" (Announcement 2014-14) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 1, 2014; to the Committee on Finance.

EC-5221. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to sections 36(c) and 36(d) of the Arms Export Control Act (DDTC 13-169); to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5222. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the activities of the Millennium Challenge Corporation during fiscal year 2013; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-5223. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 20-303, "Senior Citizen Real Property Tax Relief Act of 2014"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-5224. A communication from the Regulatory Coordinator, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standards to Prevent, Detect, and Respond to Sexual Abuse and Assault in Confinement Facilities" (RIN1653-AA65) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on April 2, 2014; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5225. A communication from the Director, Administrative Office of the United States Courts, transmitting, pursuant to law, reports entitled "Executive Summary of the 2013 Annual Report of the Director of the Administrative Office of the United States Courts" and "Judicial Business of the United States Courts"; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

EC-5226. A communication from the Chairman of the National Health Care Workforce

Commission, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the status of the Commission; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-5227. A communication from the Secretary of Health and Human Services, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a petition to add workers who were employed at the Joslyn Manufacturing and Supply Co. in Fort Wayne, Indiana, to the Special Exposure Cohort; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petition or memorial was laid before the Senate and was referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-209. A concurrent resolution adopted by the General Assembly of the State of Ohio urging the President of the United States, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the Congress to take prompt action to reduce the processing time for veterans' disability benefit claims; to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 21

Whereas, The men and women of the United States armed forces have bravely and selflessly served our country; and

Whereas, The United States Department of Veterans Affairs disability benefits program provides monetary support to veterans whose military service has caused or aggravated a disabling medical condition; and

Whereas, The number of veterans applying for disability benefits has increased in recent years because of the large number of new veterans and the expansion of eligibility for benefits for certain service-connected diseases; and

Whereas, The United States Government Accountability Office reports that between fiscal years 2009 and 2012, the average length of time for the Department of Veterans Affairs to complete a disability claim increased from 161 days to 260 days; that the number of backlogged claims, which have been awaiting a decision for more than 125 days, has more than tripled since September 2009; and that appeals processing at the Department's regional offices has slowed by 56 per cent over the last several years: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That we, the members of the 130th General Assembly of the State of Ohio, urge the President of the United States, the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the Congress of the United States to take prompt action to reduce the processing time for veterans' disability benefit claims; and be it further

Resolved, That the Clerk of the House of Representatives transmit duly authenticated copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the United States Secretary of Veterans Affairs, the President Pro Tempore and Secretary of the United States Senate, the Speaker and Clerk of the United States House of Representatives, each member of the Ohio Congressional delegation, and the news media of Ohio.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

The following reports of committees were submitted:

By Mr. TESTER, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, without amendment:

S. 161. A bill to extend the Federal recognition to the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana, and for other purposes.

S. 1074. A bill to extend Federal recognition to the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, the

Chickahominy Indian Tribe-Easter Division, the Upper Mattaponi Tribe, the Rappahannock Tribe, Inc., the Monacan Indian Nation, and the Nansemond Indian Tribe.

By Mr. TESTER, from the Committee on Indian Affairs, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute:

S. 1219. A bill to authorize the Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians Water Rights Settlement, and for other purposes.

EXECUTIVE REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

The following executive reports of nominations were submitted:

By Mr. LEAHY for the Committee on the Judiciary.

Cheryl Ann Krause, of New Jersey, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit.

Richard Franklin Boulware II, of Nevada, to be United States District Judge for the District of Nevada.

Salvador Mendoza, Jr., of Washington, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Washington.

Staci Michelle Yandle, of Illinois, to be United States District Judge for the Southern District of Illinois.

Leon Rodriguez, of Maryland, to be Director of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security.

Damon Paul Martinez, of New Mexico, to be United States Attorney for the District of New Mexico for the term of four years.

(Nominations without an asterisk were reported with the recommendation that they be confirmed.)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

The following bills and joint resolutions were introduced, read the first and second times by unanimous consent, and referred as indicated:

By Mr. MARKEY:

S. 2203. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to permanently extend the tax treatment for certain build America bonds, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. HARKIN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2204. A bill to establish the Proprietary Education Oversight Coordination Committee; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

By Mr. ENZI (for himself, Mr. PORTMAN, Mr. RISCH, Mr. BARRASSO, Mr. SCOTT, and Mr. THUNE):

S. 2205. A bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt certain small businesses from the employer health insurance mandate and to modify the definition of full-time employee for purposes of such mandate; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mr. COBURN (for himself and Mrs. McCASKILL):

S. 2206. A bill to streamline the collection and distribution of government information; to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

By Mr. KING:

S. 2207. A bill to amend the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971 to require all political committees to notify the Federal Election Commission within 48 hours of receiving cumulative contributions of \$1,000 or more from any contributor during a calendar year, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Rules and Administration.

By Mr. KIRK (for himself and Ms. KLOBUCHAR):

S. 2208. A bill to allow the Secretary of the Treasury to rely on State examinations for certain financial institutions, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mr. CARDIN (for himself, Mr. RUBIO, Mr. KAINÉ, and Mrs. SHAHEEN):

S. 2209. A bill to require a report on accountability for war crimes and crimes against humanity in Syria; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 2210. A bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to require the Secretary of Agriculture to make loan guarantees and grants to finance certain improvements to school lunch facilities, to train school food service personnel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

By Mr. MURPHY (for himself and Mr. BOOKER):

S. 2211. A bill to amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to protect the enrollment of incarcerated youth for medical assistance under the Medicaid program, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Finance.

By Mrs. FISCHER:

S. 2212. A bill to amend the Consumer Financial Protection Act of 2010 to strengthen the review authority of the Financial Stability Oversight Council of regulations issued by the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

By Mrs. FISCHER:

S. 2213. A bill to replace the Director of the Bureau of Consumer Financial Protection with a five-person Commission; to the Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs.

SUBMISSION OF CONCURRENT AND SENATE RESOLUTIONS

The following concurrent resolutions and Senate resolutions were read, and referred (or acted upon), as indicated:

By Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. KIRK):

S. Res. 410. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate regarding the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

By Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. COBURN, Mr. KIRK, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. CHAMBLISS, and Mr. RUBIO):

S. Res. 411. A resolution expressing the sense of the Senate with respect to the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Moldova; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

ADDITIONAL COSPONSORS

S. 132

At the request of Mr. CARPER, the name of the Senator from Ohio (Mr. BROWN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 132, a bill to provide for the admission of the State of New Columbia into the Union.

S. 315

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Massachusetts (Ms. WARREN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 315, a bill to reauthorize

and extend the Paul D. Wellstone Muscular Dystrophy Community Assistance, Research, and Education Amendments of 2008.

S. 452

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Arkansas (Mr. PRYOR) was added as a cosponsor of S. 452, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act to reduce the incidence of diabetes among Medicare beneficiaries.

S. 530

At the request of Mr. PAUL, the name of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 530, a bill to make participation in the American Community Survey voluntary, except with respect to certain basic questions, and for other purposes.

S. 635

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from New Hampshire (Mrs. SHAHEEN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 635, a bill to amend the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act to provide an exception to the annual written privacy notice requirement.

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER) was added as a cosponsor of S. 635, *supra*.

S. 642

At the request of Mr. ENZI, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 642, a bill to amend the Public Health Service Act and title XVIII of the Social Security Act to make the provision of technical services for medical imaging examinations and radiation therapy treatments safer, more accurate, and less costly.

S. 1011

At the request of Mr. JOHANNIS, the names of the Senator from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) and the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS) were added as cosponsors of S. 1011, a bill to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the centennial of Boys Town, and for other purposes.

S. 1029

At the request of Mr. PORTMAN, the names of the Senator from Oklahoma (Mr. INHOFE) and the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. ENZI) were added as cosponsors of S. 1029, a bill to reform the process by which Federal agencies analyze and formulate new regulations and guidance documents.

S. 1143

At the request of Mr. MORAN, the name of the Senator from Mississippi (Mr. COCHRAN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1143, a bill to amend title XVIII of the Social Security Act with respect to physician supervision of therapeutic hospital outpatient services.

S. 1332

At the request of Ms. COLLINS, the name of the Senator from North Dakota (Ms. HEITKAMP) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1332, a bill to amend title

XVIII of the Social Security Act to ensure more timely access to home health services for Medicare beneficiaries under the Medicare program.

S. 1369

At the request of Mr. BROWN, the name of the Senator from Louisiana (Ms. LANDRIEU) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1369, a bill to provide additional flexibility to the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System to establish capital standards that are properly tailored to the unique characteristics of the business of insurance, and for other purposes.

S. 1410

At the request of Mr. DURBIN, the names of the Senator from Pennsylvania (Mr. CASEY), the Senator from Connecticut (Mr. BLUMENTHAL) and the Senator from Wisconsin (Mr. JOHNSON) were added as cosponsors of S. 1410, a bill to focus limited Federal resources on the most serious offenders.

S. 1694

At the request of Mr. HARKIN, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. JOHNSON) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1694, a bill to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to allow a credit against income tax for the purchase of hearing aids.

S. 1733

At the request of Ms. KLOBUCHAR, the name of the Senator from Michigan (Ms. STABENOW) was added as a cosponsor of S. 1733, a bill to stop exploitation through trafficking.

S. 1996

At the request of Mrs. HAGAN, the names of the Senator from Colorado (Mr. UDALL), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. CHAMBLISS), the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. HEINRICH), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. ISAKSON), the Senator from Minnesota (Ms. KLOBUCHAR), the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO), the Senator from Virginia (Mr. WARNER) and the Senator from South Carolina (Mr. GRAHAM) were added as cosponsors of S. 1996, a bill to protect and enhance opportunities for recreational hunting, fishing, and shooting, and for other purposes.

S. 2013

At the request of Mr. RUBIO, the name of the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. THUNE) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2013, a bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to provide for the removal of Senior Executive Service employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs for performance, and for other purposes.

S. 2171

At the request of Mr. FRANKEN, the name of the Senator from Illinois (Mr. DURBIN) was added as a cosponsor of S. 2171, a bill to address voluntary location tracking of electronic communications devices, and for other purposes.

S. CON. RES. 33

At the request of Ms. STABENOW, the name of the Senator from Vermont (Mr. LEAHY) was added as a cosponsor of S. Con. Res. 33, a concurrent resolu-

tion celebrating the 100th anniversary of the enactment of the Smith-Lever Act, which established the nationwide Cooperative Extension System.

STATEMENTS ON INTRODUCED BILLS AND JOINT RESOLUTIONS

By Mr. DURBIN (for himself, Mr. HARKIN, and Mr. BROWN):

S. 2204. A bill to establish the Proprietary Education Oversight Coordination Committee; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the text of the bill be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the text of the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2204

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Proprietary Education Oversight Coordination Improvement Act".

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) EXECUTIVE OFFICER.—The term "executive officer", with respect to a proprietary institution of higher education that is a publicly traded corporation, means—

(A) the president of such corporation;

(B) a vice president of such corporation who is in charge of a principal business unit, division, or function of such corporation, such as sales, administration, or finance; or

(C) any other officer or person who performs a policy making function for such corporation.

(2) FEDERAL EDUCATION ASSISTANCE.—The term "Federal education assistance" means any Federal financial assistance provided under any Federal law through a grant, a contract, a subsidy, a loan, a guarantee, an insurance, or any other means to a proprietary institution of higher education, including Federal financial assistance that is disbursed or delivered to such institution, on behalf of a student, or to a student to be used to attend such institution, except that such term shall not include any monthly housing stipend provided under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code.

(3) PRIVATE EDUCATION LOAN.—The term "private education loan"—

(A) means a loan provided by a private educational lender (as defined in section 140(a) of the Truth in Lending Act (15 U.S.C. 1650(a))) that—

(i) is not made, insured, or guaranteed under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.);

(ii) is issued expressly for postsecondary educational expenses to a borrower, regardless of whether the loan is provided through the educational institution that the subject student attends or directly to the borrower from the private educational lender (as so defined); and

(iii) is not made, insured, or guaranteed under title VII or title VIII of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. 292 et seq. and 296 et seq.); and

(B) does not include an extension of credit under an open end consumer credit plan, a reverse mortgage transaction, a residential mortgage transaction, or any other loan that is secured by real property or a dwelling.

(4) PROPRIETARY INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term "proprietary institution of higher education" has the meaning

given the term in section 102(b) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002(b)).

(5) RECRUITING AND MARKETING ACTIVITIES.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the term “recruiting and marketing activities” means activities that consist of the following:

(i) Advertising and promotion activities, including paid announcements in newspapers, magazines, radio, television, billboards, electronic media, naming rights, or any other public medium of communication, including paying for displays or promotions at job fairs, military installations, or college recruiting events.

(ii) Efforts to identify and attract prospective students, either directly or through a contractor or other third party, including contact concerning a prospective student’s potential enrollment or application for a grant, a loan, or work assistance under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.) or participation in preadmission or advising activities, including—

(I) paying employees responsible for overseeing enrollment and for contacting potential students in-person, by phone, by email, or by other internet communications regarding enrollment; and

(II) soliciting an individual to provide contact information to an institution of higher education, including through websites established for such purpose and funds paid to third parties for such purpose.

(iii) Such other activities as the Secretary of Education may prescribe, including paying for promotion or sponsorship of education or military-related associations.

(B) EXCEPTIONS.—Any activity that is required as a condition of receipt of funds by an institution under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.), is specifically authorized under such title, or is otherwise specified by the Secretary of Education, shall not be considered to be a recruiting and marketing activity under subparagraph (A).

(6) STATE APPROVAL AGENCY.—The term “State approval agency” means any State agency that determines whether an institution of higher education is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education.

(7) VETERANS SERVICE ORGANIZATION.—The term “veterans service organization” means an organization recognized by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the representation of veterans under section 5902 of title 38, United States Code.

SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMITTEE.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established a committee to be known as the “Proprietary Education Oversight Coordination Committee” (referred to in this Act as the “Committee”) and to be composed of the head (or the designee of such head) of each of the following Federal entities:

- (1) The Department of Education.
- (2) The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.
- (3) The Department of Justice.
- (4) The Securities and Exchange Commission.
- (5) The Department of Defense.
- (6) The Department of Veterans Affairs.
- (7) The Federal Trade Commission.
- (8) The Department of Labor.
- (9) The Internal Revenue Service.
- (10) At the discretion of the President, any other relevant Federal agency or department.

(b) PURPOSES.—The Committee shall have the following purposes:

(1) Coordinate Federal oversight of proprietary institutions of higher education to—

(A) improve enforcement of applicable Federal laws and regulations;

(B) increase accountability of proprietary institutions of higher education to students and taxpayers; and

(C) ensure the promotion of quality education programs.

(2) Coordinate Federal activities to protect students from unfair, deceptive, abusive, unethical, fraudulent, or predatory practices, policies, or procedures of proprietary institutions of higher education.

(3) Encourage information sharing among agencies related to Federal investigations, audits, or inquiries of proprietary institutions of higher education.

(4) Increase coordination and cooperation between Federal and State agencies, including State Attorneys General and State approval agencies, with respect to improving oversight and accountability of proprietary institutions of higher education.

(5) Develop best practices and consistency among Federal and State agencies in the dissemination of consumer information regarding proprietary institutions of higher education to ensure that students, parents, and other stakeholders have easy access to such information.

(c) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) DESIGNEES.—For any designee described in subsection (a), the head of the member entity shall appoint a high-level official who exercises significant decision making authority for the oversight or investigatory activities and responsibilities related to proprietary institutions of higher education of the respective Federal entity of such head.

(2) CHAIRPERSON.—The Secretary of Education or the designee of such Secretary shall serve as the Chairperson of the Committee.

(3) COMMITTEE SUPPORT.—The head of each entity described in subsection (a) shall ensure appropriate staff and officials of such entity are available to support the Committee-related work of such entity.

SEC. 4. MEETINGS.

(a) COMMITTEE MEETINGS.—The members of the Committee shall meet regularly, but not less than once during each quarter of each fiscal year, to carry out the purposes described in section 3(b).

(b) MEETINGS WITH STATE AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDERS.—The Committee shall meet not less than once each fiscal year, and shall otherwise interact regularly, with State Attorneys General, State approval agencies, veterans service organizations, and consumer advocates to carry out the purposes described in section 3(b).

SEC. 5. REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Committee shall submit a report each year to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate, the Committee on Education and the Workforce of the House of Representatives, and any other committee of Congress that the Committee determines appropriate.

(b) PUBLIC ACCESS.—The report described in subsection (a) shall be made available to the public in a manner that is easily accessible to parents, students, and other stakeholders in accordance with the best practices developed under section 3(b)(5).

(c) CONTENTS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The report shall include—

(A) an accounting of any action (as defined in paragraph (3)) taken by the Federal Government, any member entity of the Committee, or a State—

(i) to enforce Federal or State laws and regulations applicable to proprietary institutions of higher education;

(ii) to hold proprietary institutions of higher education accountable to students and taxpayers; and

(iii) to promote quality education programs;

(B) a summary of complaints against each proprietary institution of higher education received by any member entity of the Committee;

(C) the data described in paragraph (2) and any other data relevant to proprietary institutions of higher education that the Committee determines appropriate; and

(D) recommendations of the Committee for such legislative and administrative actions as the Committee determines are necessary to—

(i) improve enforcement of applicable Federal laws;

(ii) increase accountability of proprietary institutions of higher education to students and taxpayers; and

(iii) ensure the promotion of quality education programs.

(2) DATA.—

(A) INDUSTRY-WIDE DATA.—The report shall include data on all proprietary institutions of higher education that consists of information regarding—

(i) the total amount of Federal education assistance that proprietary institutions of higher education received for the previous academic year, and the percentage of the total amount of Federal education assistance provided to institutions of higher education (as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)) for such previous academic year that reflects such total amount of Federal education assistance provided to proprietary institutions of higher education for such previous academic year;

(ii) the total amount of Federal education assistance that proprietary institutions of higher education received for the previous academic year, disaggregated by—

(I) educational assistance in the form of a loan provided under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.);

(II) educational assistance in the form of a grant provided under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070 et seq.);

(III) educational assistance provided under chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code;

(IV) tuition assistance provided under section 2007 of title 10, United States Code;

(V) assistance provided under section 1784a of title 10, United States Code; and

(VI) Federal education assistance not described in subclauses (I) through (V);

(iii) the percentage of the total amount of Federal education assistance provided to institutions of higher education (as defined in section 102 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1002)) for such previous academic year for each of the programs described in subclauses (I) through (V) of clause (ii) that reflects such total amount of Federal education assistance provided to proprietary institutions of higher education for such previous academic year for each of such programs;

(iv) the average retention and graduation rates for students pursuing a degree at proprietary institutions of higher education;

(v) the average cohort default rate (as defined in section 435(m) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1085(m)) for proprietary institutions of higher education, and an annual list of cohort default rates (as defined in such section) for all proprietary institutions of higher education;

(vi) for careers requiring the passage of a licensing examination—

(I) the passage rate of individuals who attended a proprietary institution of higher education taking such examination to pursue such a career; and

(II) the passage rate of all individuals taking such exam to pursue such a career; and

(vii) the use of private education loans at proprietary institutions of higher education that includes—

(I) an estimate of the total number of such loans; and

(II) information on the average debt, default rate, and interest rate of such loans.

(B) DATA ON PUBLICLY TRADED CORPORATIONS.—

(i) IN GENERAL.—The report shall include data on proprietary institutions of higher education that are publicly traded corporations, consisting of information on—

(I) any pre-tax profit of such proprietary institutions of higher education—

(aa) reported as a total amount and an average percent of revenue for all such proprietary institutions of higher education; and

(bb) reported for each such proprietary institution of higher education;

(II) revenue for such proprietary institutions of higher education spent on recruiting and marketing activities, student instruction, and student support services, reported—

(aa) as a total amount and an average percent of revenue for all such proprietary institutions of higher education; and

(bb) for each such proprietary institution of higher education;

(III) total compensation packages of the executive officers of each such proprietary institution of higher education;

(IV) a list of institutional loan programs offered by each such proprietary institution of higher education that includes information on the default and interest rates of such programs; and

(V) the data described in clauses (ii) and (iii).

(ii) DISAGGREGATED BY OWNERSHIP.—The report shall include data on proprietary institutions of higher education that are publicly traded corporations, disaggregated by corporate or parent entity, brand name, and campus, consisting of—

(I) the total cost of attendance for each program at each such proprietary institution of higher education, and information comparing such total cost for each such program to—

(aa) the total cost of attendance for each program at each public institution of higher education; and

(bb) the average total cost of attendance for each program at all institutions of higher education, including such institutions that are public and such institutions that are private;

(II) total enrollment, disaggregated by—

(aa) individuals enrolled in programs taken online; and

(bb) individuals enrolled in programs that are not taken online;

(III) the average retention and graduation rates for students pursuing a degree at such proprietary institutions of higher education;

(IV) the percentage of students enrolled in such proprietary institutions of higher education who complete a program of such an institution within—

(aa) the standard period of completion for such program; and

(bb) a period that is 150 percent of such standard period of completion;

(V) the total cost of attendance for each program at such proprietary institutions of higher education;

(VI) the average cohort default rate, as defined in section 435(m) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1085(m)), for such proprietary institutions of higher education, and an annual list of cohort default rates (as defined in such section) for all proprietary institutions of higher education;

(VII) the median educational debt incurred by students who complete a program at such

a proprietary institution of higher education;

(VIII) the median educational debt incurred by students who start but do not complete a program at such a proprietary institution of higher education;

(IX) the job placement rate for students who complete a program at such a proprietary institution of higher education and the type of employment obtained by such students;

(X) for careers requiring the passage of a licensing examination, the rate of individuals who attended such a proprietary institution of higher education and passed such an examination; and

(XI) the number of complaints from students enrolled in such proprietary institutions of higher education who have submitted a complaint to any member entity of the Committee.

(iii) DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS ASSISTANCE.—

(I) IN GENERAL.—To the extent practicable, the report shall provide information on the data described in clause (ii) for individuals using, to pay for the costs of attending such a proprietary institution of higher education, Federal education assistance provided under—

(aa) chapter 33 of title 38, United States Code;

(bb) section 2007 of title 10, United States Code; and

(cc) section 1784a of title 10, United States Code.

(II) REVENUE.—The report shall provide information on the revenue of proprietary institutions of higher education that are publicly traded corporations that is derived from the Federal education assistance described in subclause (I).

(C) COMPARISON DATA.—To the extent practicable, the report shall provide information comparing the data described in subparagraph (B) for proprietary institutions of higher education that are publicly traded corporations with such data for public institutions of higher education disaggregated by State.

(3) ACCOUNTING OF ANY ACTION.—For the purposes of paragraph (1)(A), the term “any action” shall include—

(A) a complaint filed by a Federal or State agency in a local, State, Federal, or tribal court;

(B) an administrative proceeding by a Federal or State agency involving noncompliance of any applicable law or regulation; or

(C) any other review, audit, or administrative process by any Federal or State agency that results in a penalty, suspension, or termination from any Federal or State program.

SEC. 6. FOR-PROFIT COLLEGE WARNING LIST FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Each academic year, the Committee shall publish a list to be known as the “For-Profit College Warning List for Parents and Students” to be comprised of proprietary institutions of higher education—

(1) that have engaged in illegal activity during the previous academic year as determined by a Federal or State court;

(2) that have entered into a settlement resulting in a monetary payment;

(3) that have had any higher education program withdrawn or suspended; or

(4) for which the Committee has sufficient evidence of widespread or systemic unfair, deceptive, abusive, unethical, fraudulent, or predatory practices, policies, or procedures that pose a threat to the academic success, financial security, or general best interest of students.

(b) DETERMINATIONS.—In making a determination pursuant to subsection (a)(4), the

Committee may consider evidence that includes the following:

(1) Any consumer complaint collected by any member entity of the Committee.

(2) Any complaint filed by a Federal or State agency in a Federal, State, local, or tribal court.

(3) Any administrative proceeding by a Federal or State agency involving noncompliance of any applicable law or regulation.

(4) Any other review, audit, or administrative process by any Federal or State agency that results in a penalty, suspension, or termination from any Federal or State program.

(5) Data or information submitted by a proprietary institution of higher education to any accrediting agency or association recognized by the Secretary of Education pursuant to section 496 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1099b) or the findings or adverse actions of any such accrediting agency or association.

(6) Information submitted by a proprietary institution of higher education to any member entity of the Committee.

(7) Any other evidence that the Committee determines relevant in making a determination pursuant to subsection (a)(4).

(c) PUBLICATION.—Not later than July 1 of each fiscal year, the Committee shall publish the list described in subsection (a) prominently and in a manner that is easily accessible to parents, students, and other stakeholders in accordance with any best practices developed under section 3(b)(5).

By Ms. COLLINS (for herself and Ms. HEITKAMP):

S. 2210. A bill to amend the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to require the Secretary of Agriculture to make loan guarantees and grants to finance certain improvements to school lunch facilities, to train school food service personnel, and for other purposes; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Ms. COLLINS. Mr. President, I am pleased today to join my friend from North Dakota, Senator HEITKAMP, in introducing the School Food Modernization Act to assist schools in providing healthier meals to students throughout the country.

School meals play a vital role in the lives of our young people. More than 30 million children participate in the National School Lunch Program every schoolday. In Maine, 40 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on household income.

The food served to these children has a demonstrable effect on their health and well-being. Many children consume up to half their daily caloric intake at school. In fact, children often get their most nutritious meal of the day at school instead of at home.

At the same time, too many of our children are at risk of serious disease. One-third of the children in this country are overweight or obese, which increases their risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases. These ailments may have a lifelong effect on their health as they grow to adulthood.

Given the concerns about the health of our children, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has issued updated school

meal nutrition standards that call for increased servings of fruit, vegetables, low-fat products, and whole grains while limiting the intake of fats, sugar, salt, and excess calories.

In response, our schools have stepped up to the plate. Nationwide, schools are working diligently to meet the standards and serve healthier meals. For example, in the New Sweden Consolidated School in Aroostook County, ME, food service manager Melanie Lagasse prepares meals from scratch instead of opening cans or pushing a defrost button. The school's 64 students, ranging from preschool to eighth grade, have grown to relish the chicken stew, baked fish, and whole grain pasta and meatloaf that she makes fresh every day.

Many schools, however, lack the right tools for preparing meals rich in fresh ingredients and must rely on workarounds that are expensive, inefficient, and unsustainable. Schools built decades ago lack the tools and the infrastructure necessary to comply fully with the new USDA guidelines. In fact, many lack any capacity beyond reheating and holding food for meal service.

To serve healthier meals to their students, 99 percent of Maine school districts need at least one piece of equipment and almost half—48 percent—of districts need kitchen infrastructure upgrades. While some of the needs appear quite simple—food processors, knives, serving-portion utensils, scales, utility carts—there is still a cost. The median equipment need per school is \$45,000.

Even more costly would be making the required changes to infrastructure. Forty-eight percent of Maine schools need some kind of infrastructure change to serve healthy meals. For example, 41 percent of schools need more physical space, 22 percent need more electrical capacity, 21 percent need more plumbing capacity, and 19 percent need more ventilation. In addition, for Maine, 82 percent of school districts are in areas defined as rural.

Add the equipment costs together with the infrastructure costs and it is estimated that overall, \$58.8 million would be needed just in Maine to serve healthy meals to all of our students. That far exceeds the \$74,000 grant the USDA awarded Maine in March for new equipment.

Our bill aims to make better use of current resources by authorizing loan guarantee assistance and grants for school equipment and infrastructure improvements and by helping food service personnel meet the updated nutrition standards. First, it would establish a loan guarantee assistance program within USDA to help schools acquire new equipment to prepare and serve healthier, more nutritious meals to students. School administrators and other eligible borrowers could obtain Federal guarantees for 80 percent of the loan value needed to construct, remodel, or expand their kitchens, dining, or food storage infrastructure.

Second, it would provide targeted grant assistance to give school administrators and food service directors the seed funding needed to upgrade kitchen infrastructure or to purchase high-quality, durable kitchen equipment such as commercial ovens, steamers, and stoves.

Finally, to aid school food service personnel in meeting the updated nutrition guidelines, the legislation would strengthen training and provide technical assistance by authorizing USDA to provide support on a competitive basis to highly qualified third-party trainers to develop and administer training and technical assistance.

We need to start our schoolchildren off on the right food every day. If they are going to compete in the global arena, they need to be healthy and their minds and bodies fully nourished. This bill will help us achieve that goal.

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS

SENATE RESOLUTION 410—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE REGARDING THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

Mr. MENENDEZ (for himself and Mr. KIRK) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 410

Whereas the Armenian Genocide was conceived and carried out by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, resulting in the deportation of nearly 2,000,000 Armenians, of whom 1,500,000 men, women, and children were killed and 500,000 survivors were expelled from their homes, and the elimination of the over 2,500-year presence of Armenians in their historic homeland;

Whereas, on May 24, 1915, the Allied Powers of England, France, and Russia jointly issued a statement explicitly charging for the first time ever another government of committing crimes "against humanity and civilization";

Whereas Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term "genocide", and whose draft resolution for a genocide convention treaty became the framework for the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, recognized the Armenian Genocide as the type of crime the United Nations should prevent and punish through the setting of international standards;

Whereas Senate Concurrent Resolution 12, 64th Congress, agreed to February 9, 1916, resolved that "the President of the United States be respectfully asked to designate a day on which the citizens of this country may give expression to their sympathy by contributing funds now being raised for the relief of the Armenians", who at the time were enduring "starvation, disease, and untold suffering";

Whereas Senate Resolution 359, 66th Congress, agreed to May 11, 1920, stated that "the testimony adduced at the hearings conducted by the subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations have clearly established the truth of the reported massacres and other atrocities from which the Armenian people have suffered";

Whereas House Joint Resolution 148, 94th Congress, agreed to April 8, 1975, resolved,

"That April 24, 1975, is hereby designated as 'National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man', and the President of the United States is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such day as a day of remembrance for all the victims of genocide, especially those of Armenian ancestry . . .";

Whereas House Joint Resolution 247, 98th Congress, agreed to September 10, 1984, resolved, "That April 24, 1985, is hereby designated as 'National Day of Remembrance of Man's Inhumanity to Man', and the President of the United States is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation calling upon the people of the United States to observe such day as a day of remembrance for all the victims of genocide, especially the one and one-half million people of Armenian ancestry . . .";

Whereas the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, an independent Federal agency, unanimously resolved on April 30, 1981, that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum would document the Armenian Genocide in the Museum, and has done so through a public examination of the historic record, including lectures and the maintenance of books, records, and photographs about the Genocide;

Whereas the Government of the Republic of Turkey has continued its international campaign of Armenian Genocide denial, maintained a blockade of Armenia, and continues to pressure the small but growing Turkish civil society movement for acknowledging the Armenian Genocide;

Whereas, in April 2011, the month of remembrance of the Armenian Genocide, the Government of the Republic of Turkey demolished a 100-foot-high statue in the city of Kars which was erected to promote reconciliation with Armenia;

Whereas the denial of the Armenian Genocide by the Government of the Republic of Turkey has prevented the meaningful advancement of a constructive political, economic, and security relationship between Armenia and Turkey; and

Whereas the teaching, recognition, and commemoration of acts of genocide and other crimes against humanity is essential to preventing the re-occurrence of similar atrocities: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the Senate—

(1) to remember and observe the anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on April 24, 2014;

(2) that the President should work toward an equitable, constructive, stable, and durable Armenian-Turkish relationship that includes the full acknowledgment by the Government of the Republic of Turkey of the facts about the Armenian Genocide; and

(3) that the President should ensure that the foreign policy of the United States reflects appropriate understanding and sensitivity concerning issues related to human rights, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing, and genocide documented in the United States record relating to the Armenian Genocide.

SENATE RESOLUTION 411—EX-PRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE WITH RESPECT TO THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND SOVEREIGNTY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mrs. FISCHER, Mr. COBURN, Mr. KIRK, Mr. JOHNSON of Wisconsin, Mr. CHAMBLISS, and Mr.

RUBIO) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 411

Whereas, since 1992, the Republic of Moldova has been recognized by the international community and the United Nations;

Whereas, on March 3, 2014, the United States Government “reaffirmed the United States’ strong support for Moldovan sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders”;

Whereas the annexation of Crimea and violation of Ukrainian territorial integrity by the Russian Federation on the false premise of defending Russians and Russian speakers abroad violates the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has threatened to use its supply of energy resources as a means of intimidation in order to influence the Government of Moldova;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has been actively issuing Russian passports to the residents of Transnistria;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation maintains a contingent of Russian troops and a stockpile of Russian military equipment and ammunition within the Moldovan territory of Transnistria;

Whereas the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Government of Moldova have called upon the Government of the Russian Federation to remove its troops from the territory of Moldova;

Whereas, at the 1999 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Summit in Istanbul, Turkey, the Russian Federation committed to complete withdrawal of its military forces from the territory of the Republic of Moldova;

Whereas Moldova has been a participant in NATO’s Partnership for Peace Program and has deployed military personnel in support of the NATO-led mission in Kosovo; and

Whereas the stability and economic vitality of the Eastern European region is in the national interest of the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) affirms that it is the policy of the United States to support the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova and the inviolability of its borders;

(2) calls upon the Government of the Russian Federation to take steps to remove its military forces and materiel from within the internationally recognized territory of the Republic of Moldova;

(3) supports constructive engagement and confidence-building measures between the Government of Moldova and the authorities in Transnistria in order to secure a peaceful resolution to the conflict;

(4) expresses its belief that finding a lasting resolution to the Transnistria issue can only be accomplished by ensuring the freedom of the Government and the people of Moldova to determine their own future without external pressure or coercion;

(5) urges the President to consider increasing security and intelligence cooperation with the Government of Moldova; and

(6) affirms that lasting stability in Europe is a key priority for the United States and that it can only be achieved if the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all parties is respected.

NOTICES OF HEARINGS

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will to meet on April 9, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD-430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled “Addressing Primary Care Access and Workforce Challenges: Voices from the Field.”

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Bill Gendel of the committee staff on (202) 224-5480.

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS

Mr. HARKIN. Mr. President, I wish to announce that the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions will to meet on April 10, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD-430 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct a hearing entitled “Expanding Access to Quality Early Learning: the Strong Start for America’s Children Act.”

For further information regarding this meeting, please contact Aissa Canchola of the committee staff on (202) 224-5363.

AUTHORITY FOR COMMITTEES TO
MEET

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Armed Services be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 3, 2014, at 9:30 a.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC
WORKS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Environment and Public Works be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 3, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD-406 of the Dirksen Senate office building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Finance be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 3, 2014, at 10 a.m., in room SD-215 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 3, 2014, at 10 a.m., to hold an East Asia and Pacific Affairs subcommittee hearing entitled “Evaluating U.S. Policy on Taiwan on the 35th Anniversary of the Taiwan Relations Act (TRA).”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on

Foreign Relations be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 3, 2014, at 2 p.m. to conduct a hearing entitled, “Closed/TS/SCI: Russia Briefing.”

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Mr. REID. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on the Judiciary be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 3, 2014, at 10 a.m., in SD-226 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, to conduct an executive business meeting.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

Mr. REID. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Select Committee on Intelligence be authorized to meet during the session of the Senate on April 3, 2014, at 2:30 p.m.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PRIVILEGES OF THE FLOOR

Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that Senator BEGICH’s NOAA fellow, Bill Mowitt, be granted floor privileges for the remainder of the 113th Congress.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

SYRIA HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of Calendar No. 346.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows:

A resolution (S. Res. 384) expressing the sense of the Senate concerning the humanitarian crisis in Syria and neighboring countries, resulting in humanitarian and development challenges, and the urgent need for a political solution to the crisis.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 384) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to.

(The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 13, 2014, under “Submitted Resolutions.”)

GOLD STAR WIVES DAY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Judiciary Committee be charged from further consideration and the Senate now proceed to S. Res. 394.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A resolution (S. Res. 394) designating April 5, 2014, as "Gold Star Wives Day."

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, the preamble be agreed to, and the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 394) was agreed to.

The preamble was agreed to. (The resolution, with its preamble, is printed in the RECORD of March 24, 2014, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

GREATER WASHINGTON SOAP BOX DERBY

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to H. Con. Res. 88, which was received from the House and is at the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report the concurrent resolution by title.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 88) authorizing the use of the Capitol Grounds for the Greater Washington Soap Box Derby.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the concurrent resolution.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent the concurrent resolution be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table with no intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 88) was agreed to.

(The concurrent resolution is printed in the RECORD of February 25, 2014, under "Submitted Resolutions.")

APPOINTMENTS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair announces on behalf of the Committee on Finance, pursuant to section 8002 of title 26, U.S. Code, the designation of the following Senators as members of the Joint Committee on Taxation: the Senator from Oregon, Mr. WYDEN; the Senator from West Virginia, Mr. ROCKEFELLER; the Senator from Michigan, Ms. STABENOW; the Senator from Utah, Mr. HATCH; and the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY.

ORDERS FOR MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2014

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate completes its business today, it adjourn until 2 p.m., Monday, April 7, 2014; that following the prayer and pledge, the morning hour be deemed expired, the Journal of proceedings be approved to date, and the time for the two leaders be reserved for their use later in the day; that following any leader remarks, the Senate be in a period of morning business until 5 p.m. with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each; and that following morning business, the Senate resume consideration of H.R. 3979, the vehicle for the unemployment insurance extension, postcloture, with the time until 5:30 p.m. equally divided

and controlled between the two leaders or their designees prior to the vote on passage of H.R. 3979, as amended, as provided for under the previous order.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

PROGRAM

Mr. REID. There will be a rollcall vote on passage of the unemployment insurance bill, which takes a simple majority, at 5:30 p.m. on Monday.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY, APRIL 7, 2014, AT 2 P.M.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, if there is no further business to come before the Senate, I ask unanimous consent it adjourn under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:37 p.m., adjourned until Monday, April 7, 2014, at 2 p.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

THE JUDICIARY

ANDRE BIROTTE, JR., OF CALIFORNIA, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE CENTRAL DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA, VICE GARY ALLEN FEESS, RETIRED.
 RANDOLPH D. MOSS, OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, VICE ROBERT LEON WILKINS, ELEVATED.

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be rear admiral

REAR ADM. (LH) RAQUEL C. BONO